GRACE:

THE

TRUTH and *GROWTH*,

AND

Different Degrees thereof.

The ſumm and ſubſtance of

The laſt XV. SERMONS,

Preached by that faithfull and painfull ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt,

Mr *CHRISTOPHER LOVE*,

Late Miniſter of *Lawrence Jury*

LONDON.

To which is added,

A FUNERALL SERMON, being the very laſt ſermon he ever preached.

The Kingdome of heaven is like a graine of muſtard-ſeed which a man took and ſowed in his field, which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds; but when it is grown, it is the greateſt amongſt herbs, and becomes a tree, &c. Mat. 2. 31, 32.

London, Printed by *W. H.* for *John Rothwell*, at the Fountaine and Bear in Cheap-ſide, 1657.

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22 JUL 1969
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TO THE Christian Reader.

OUR purpoſe in publiſhing this ſmall Treatiſe, is not to make old ſores bleed, or foment any ones diſcontent, or renew any ones griefe, concerning the much lamented death of this godly and Reverend Author; nor ſhall wee mention what great loſſe the Church of God had in the death of ſo uſefull and hopefull a Miniſter: But we ſhall in a few words acquaint thee why this little piece is thus made publicke.

There are many imperfect Copies of Mr *Love*'s Sermons, which are likely to be obtruded into the world, by ſome who regard no other end in publiſhing and printing Books, then their own private gaine: To prevent which, we have

from his owne Notes publiſhed theſe Sermons, and ſhal deſire the Reader to take notice, that whatever Sermons of this Author ſhall be thought fit to bee publiſhed, ſhall be atteſted with ſome of our hands, who are intruſted with his Papers, and hope none will be ſo injurious to the author and others, as to preſume to print any thing of Mr *Love's*, without the ſaid Atteſtation.

Thou haſt here but the marrow and ſubſtance of the laſt Sermons preached by that late faithfull Servant of God. Pulpit repetitions and enlargements are here omitted, wee having endeavoured to accommodate thee in the *price* in buying, and in thy *pains* in reading, that thou mightſt have much *fruit*, though there be not many *leaves*. Thoſe books are beſt that have much worth and weight in a little bulk; and ſuch is this, if wee miſtake not.

Librirerum, non verborum facundi.

The Reverend Author, though he had not attained many yeers, yet he had gotten much experience about ſoul-affairs. Theſe were his laſt Meditations, and therefore the more deſired by, and wee hope will bee the more acceptable to thoſe, to whoſe ſouls his Miniſtry was profitable and precious. Thou

Thou wilt find here no new, uncouth, and unſcripturall expreſſions, but plain practical Doctrine, old Divinity, ſound, ſolid, and Conſcience-ſearching Truths; the gracious Authour preaching and preſſing them on the hearts of his hearers, from his own experience of them. Neither wilt thou meet with any railings or reproachings of the publick and preſent Governours, (the uſuall, though the moſt unjuſt Charge againſt the *Presbyterian* Miniſters.) This whole Diſcourſe is not about *State* but *Soul-affairs*; which is another reaſon why it is publiſhed, to check the licentiouſneſſe of this Age, which hath ſurfeited upon abſurd and unprofitable Pamphlets. The Lord give thee to have thy ſpirituall *ſenſes exerciſed, to diſcern both good and evill.* Heb. 5. 14. But alas! what between *State-mutations*, and *Church-diſſentions*, ſpirituall truths lye by neglected. It is much to be feared, the *Work of Grace* goes on but ſlowly, few enquire into their ſoul-ſtate. But to enquire into our ſpiritual eſtate, is the beſt husbandry in the world. If we are to be *diligent to know the ſtate of our flocks*, then ſurely wee ſhould give all diligence to know how it is with our precious and

immortal ſouls. The benefit & profit of this ſoul-ſearching, will abundantly recompence our pains and care in performing it.

There are two great miſtakes to which the beſt Chriſtians are very ſubject.

1. Either to deſpiſe or diſparage the work of grace, if their meaſures be ſmal

2. Or elſe if their attainments bee ſomewhat conſiderable, to ſit down contented with their acquired meaſures.

Wee beſeech you take heed of both theſe evils, which are both alike; Unthankfulneſſe to God, and injuriouſneſſe to your own ſoul; the one deſpiſeth the truth, and the other neglects the growth of *Grace*.

1. If thou art one of the tender plants in Chriſts Orchard, a weak lamb in his Flock, a babe in his Family, yet oh, deſpiſe not *the day of ſmal things in thy ſoul*; though thy gifts be few, and thy comforts fewer, yet tread not out thy ſelfe the *ſmoaking flax*; *ſtay thy ſelfe upon his name who is a rock of Ages, and whoſe work is perfect*, and his grace unchangeable, *who will bring forth judgement unto victory*. Slight not the leaſt meaſure of grace: though the firſt and ruder draught bee

but drawn on thy ſoul, yet be comforted in this, that the image of Chriſt is begun to be renewed there.

But be ſure thy grace be right: temporary faith, partiall obedience, mercenary love, pretended zeal, legall ſorrow, faigned humility, may make up a lifeleſſe picture of a Profeſſor, *who hath the form, without the power of godlineſſe*: but it is true *Grace* that makes a true Chriſtian. Common gifts and graces may bring a man near heaven, but they will never bring a man into heaven. This Treatiſe therefore will teach thee to bring thy grace to the true touch-ſtone. It is one of the ſaddeſt conſiderations that can ſettle on the heart of a Chriſtian, to think how high a formal hypocrite may go towards heaven with his ſeeming grace, and how long a true child of God may fall by ſin towards hell, and yet have real *Grace*. It is a dreadful thing to think how many Profeſſors in our age reſt in duties performed, and parts acquired, and never examine themſelves whether they are in the faith, and have attained that true grace which Reprobates and Hypocrites can never have.

When we find in Scripture a *Cain ſacrificing*, [a] Gen. 4. 3.

crificing, [b] *Pharaoh confeſſing his ſinne*, [c] *Ahab faſting*, [d] *Saul weeping*, [e] *Iehu reforming*, [f] *Iudas repenting and reſtoring*, [g] *Simon Magus believing*, [h] *Herod rejoycing, and* [i] *Felix trembling at the word*; and yet not one of theſe had one dram of *Grace*: How carefull ſhould we then be to examine and prove our ſelves whether we are in a ſtate of true grace? Oh! it is very ſad to fal ſhort of them, that fal ſhort of heaven. As for the moſt part of Profeſſors of our times, it is much to be feared, that their ſpirituall trading lies more for the increaſe of gifts and parts (in which their Religion conſiſts) then for *Grace*, which is the true reaſon why we have ſo little truth and peace amongſt us: for parts puffe up the mind, pride begets contention, and contention encreaſeth error. Former times had leſſe gifts, but more *Grace*, leſſe knowledge and more conſcience.

Plus ſcientia, minus conſcientiæ.

1. If thou art one of thoſe, that upon good Scripture-grounds canſt ſay, thou haſt the truth of *Grace*, labour then after growth in *Grace*. Oh labour, that whilſt others are joining *houſe to houſe, and laying field to field, till they be placed alone in the midſt of the earth, that you give all dili-*

Iſaiah 5. 8.

gence

b Exo. 9. 27.
c 1 Kin. 21. 27.
d 1 Sam. 14. 26.
e 1 Kin. 10. 16.
f Mat. 27. 3.
g Acts 8. 13
h Mar. 6. 20
i Acts 24. 25.

gence to add to your faith vertue, and to your vertue knowledge, & to your knowledge temperance, and to your temperance patience, and to patience godlineſs, and to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs, & to brotherly kindnes charity, that theſe graces may be in you and abound, that you may be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Ieſus. 2 Pet. 1. 6, 7, 8.

No Chriſtian ſhould content himſelf with any meaſure of grace attained, for he is like to make uſe of all the *grace* he hath, had he a *Benjamins* portion. The time is comming, when one dram of true *grace* will be of more worth then all the world. The comforts of grace, *the joy and peace of believing*, wil be Cordials to you when you are dying, and will ſet up ſuch a light in the ſoul, which the ſhadow of death ſhall neither damp nor darken. But alas! moſt men are laboring more after wealth then faith, more after greatnes in the world then true *grace*, of whom when they die it may be ſaid, *they had laid up goods for many years*; but it cannot be ſaid, *in them was found ſome good thing towards the Lord.* Men do uſually lay up riches for a deare yeare, they'l ſay, they know not what need they may have before they come to dye: Be then as wiſe and

Plus valebit conſcientia pura quam marſupia plena.

and provident for your precious ſouls. Your temptations & trials may be ſuch, that you may have ſuch for all your *faith* and *patience*. *Eat* (ſaid the Angel to *Elijah*) *for the journy is long*. It is no ſhort way to heaven, nor is the oppoſition ſmal thou ſhalt meet withall in thy paſſage thither. Oh then get thy ſoule well ſtored with ſpirituall proviſion of grace, and the comforts of it. It is true, thy ſafety is in the being, but thy comfort ſtands in the ſtrength and activity of thy graces. Weak *Grace* is ſaving, but ſtrong *grace* is comfortable; truth of *grace* ſhall be rewarded with heaven, growth of *grace* doth, as it were, antedate heaven. The leaſt true *grace* will bring thee to heaven, but the more *grace* thou haſt, the fitter for, and ſurer thou wilt be of heaven. The Lord make theſe and all the labours of his ſervants profitable to his Church. *Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing you know theſe things before, beware leſt ye alſo being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs. But grow in* Grace, *and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Ieſus Chriſt*; to him be glory both now and for ever. *Amen.*

Rev. 13 10.
1 Kin. 19. 7.
2 Pet. 3. 17, 18.

London, *February* 13. 165½

Edmund Calamy. Simeon Aſh. Jerem. Whitaker. William Taylor.

1 KING. 14.
part of the 13. verſe.

Sermon I. At Lawrence Jury, London, March 9, 165$\frac{0}{1}$

——Becauſe in him there is found ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael in the houſe of Ieroboam.

THis Chapter contains in it *Ahijahs* Propheſie, foretelling what diſmall judgements ſhould befall *Ieroboam* and his poſterity, for his Idolatry in worſhip, and defection from the government and houſe of *David*. For which ſins *God did deſtroy him & his poſterity*: and not only the bad, [a] but the good were puniſhed for their fathers guilt. For ſo it is intimated in this verſe, out of which the Text is taken. Here was a young man, *Ieroboams* ſon, that ſhould die for the fathers fault; and yet here was a mitigation of the puniſhment, that he ſhould not dye after the ſame manner that the reſt did, *hee ſhall go to his grave in peace, becauſe in him there is faund ſome good, &c.* Behold the goodneſſe of God! a little good in him, and yet the great God takes notice of the little good in him. God found as it were, one pearl in a heap of pebbles, one good young man in *Ieroboams* houſhold, that had ſome good in

[a] 1 Kings 15.29.

in him towards the Lord God of Israel.

In the whole verse, three parts.

I. A lamentation for the death of this son of *Ieroboam*; it is said, *all Israel shall mourn for him*, and so they did, *ver.* 18. —which argued there was goodnesse in him; for if he had not been desired and prized while he lived, hee would not have been so lamented at his death.

II. A limitation of his punishment, he only of *Ieroboams* family shall come to the grave, the rest of his posterity that died in the City, dogs should eat, and him that dieth in the field, should the fouls of the aire devour, *ver.* 11.

III. The commendation of his life, *in him was found some good, &c.* (of this I am not to treat.)

He is commended by the Holy Ghost; for his goodnesse is set forth,

1. By the quality of his goodnesse; it was a good thing, not a good word only, or a good purpose or inclination, with which too many content themselves, but it was a good action.

2. By the quantity of it; it was but some little good thing that was found in him, and yet that little good God did not despise or over-look.

3. By the sincerity of his goodness; there are two notable demonstrations of this young mans goodnesse.

1. It was towards the Lord God of Israel.

2. It

2. It was in *Ieroboams* houſe.

1. His goodneſſe was towards *the Lord God of Iſrael.* This argued *Pauls* ſincerity, that in his *b* ſpeaking, writing, and actions, he could and did appeale to God. That Religion ſaith the Apoſtle, *is c pure and undefiled*, that is, ſo *before God and the Father*. Many Hypocrites may bee good towards men, who are not ſo towards God; to bee rich indeed, is to *be d rich towards God*. True repentance is *e repentance towards God*; and he is unblameable indeed, that is *f* void of offence *towards God*, as well as *towards men*.

b 2 Cor. 12. 19. Gal. 1. 20.
c Jam. 1. 27.
d Luke 12. 21.
e Acts 20. 21.
f Acts 24. 16.

2. He was good in the houſe of *Ieroboam*. A wicked man may ſeeme good in a good place, but to be good in a bad place, argues men to be good indeed. To be good in *Davids* houſe, this was not ſo much; but for this young man to bee good in the houſe of *Ieroboam* his father, whom the Scripture brands for his idolatry, that *he made all Iſrael to ſin*, and yet could not make his ſonne to ſin; this argued he was ſincerely good: as it did argue *Lots* ſincerity to be righteous in *Sodom*. For *Iob* to be good in *Chaldea*; and to bee Saints in *Nero's* Palace, and to feare God in *Ieroboam's* family, this is goodneſſe indeed.

There is onely one difficulty in the Text, *viz.* What was that good thing that was found in *Abijah*.

For anſwer to this, 'tis true, the Scripture doth not particularly expreſſe what that good thing was which was found in him: but

but *Toſtatus* and *P. Martyr* affirme from the Hebrew Rabbins, that when the Jewes of the ten Tribes did on their appointed times repair to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip according to the command of God, and *Ieroboam* commanded Souldiers to intercept them, this *Abijah* did hinder the ſouldiers to kill them, and gave them paſſes to goe to *Ieruſalem* to worſhip God, and incouraged them therein, notwithſtanding the rage of his father, who had forſaken the true worſhip of God, and ſet up Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*.

Others thinke the goodneſſe of this young Prince was in this, that he would not conſent to his father in taking away the government from the houſe of *David*; but where the Scripture hath not a tongue to ſpeak, we have not an eare to hear; and therefore we ſhall not undertake to determine what the Scripture hath not determined.

There are many collaterall obſervations which I ſhall deduce from the ſeveral circumſtances in the text, I will but name ſome of them. From the conſideration that this good *Abijah* died:

1 *Obſervation.*

Good men and uſefull, and hopefull inſtruments, may be taken away by death, when wicked men may live long upon the earth.

Bad *Ieroboam* lived long, his good ſonne died ſoon; ſo true is that of *Solomon*, *a righteous man may periſh in his righteouſneſſe when a wicked man may prolong his daies in his wickedneſſe*; Briers and Thorns and Thiſtles wi-

ther

ther not ſo ſoon as Lillies and Roſes; they may be taken out of the world, of whom the world is not worthy, and they remain behind, who are not worthy to live in the world.

2. From the conſideration of the death of godly *Abijah*, when wicked *Nadab* the other ſon of *Jeroboam* lived,— Obſerve,

g 1 Kings 16 26.

That good children may bee taken away by death from their parents when ungodly children may live to be a ſhame & curſe to their parents.

2. *Obſervation.*

3. From the conſideration of the cauſe why this gracious young man died ſo ſoon, it was for his fathers ſinnes, as we may gather from *ver.* 9, 10, 11, 12.

That good children as well as bad may be outwardly puniſhed for the ſins of their parents.

3. *Obſervation.*

4. From all *Iſraels* lamenting the death of this hopefull young man, Obſerve,

That good men who have been, and might be further uſefull in their lives, ſhould be much lamented at their death; they that have lived deſired ſhould die lamented.

4. *Obſervation.* Iſa. 57 1.

5. From theſe words, *he ſhall go to his grave in peace*;

It is a great bleſſing to go to ones grave in peace in times of war and common calamity.

5. *Obſervation.*

He was good towards God.

He is good indeed who is ſo to God, as well as unto men; many are good in mans ſight, that are not ſo in the ſight of God.

6. *Obſervation.* Rom. 2, 28.

There are two other circumſtances upon which I ſhall a little inlarge my ſelfe, before

I come to the maine point I intend to handle.

From the age of this ſon of *Ieroboam*, who is here commended for his goodneſſe, it is ſaid, *he was a child ver.* 12. Whence it may be obſerved.

Doctr. 1. *It is very commendable to ſee goodneſſe in young people: to ſee young men good men, is a very commendable thing.*

There were many good men in that time, but to be good ſo ſoon as *Abijah* was, when he was a child, the Scripture records this to his praiſe.

1. I ſhall ſhew you that it is a commendable thing to ſee young men good men. This I prove,

First, Becauſe the Scripture makes very honourable mention of young men, when good men; as firſt of *Obadiah, that he feared the Lord from his youth.* And it is recorded to the honour of *i Timothy*, that *he knew the holy Scriptures from a child. Jerome* conceives that *John* was the moſt *k* beloved diſciple, becauſe he was the youngeſt of al. *l God remembers the kindneſſe of our youth.* God takes more kindly *the kindneſſe of our youth* then of our age. It was matter of joy unto *Iohn*, that hee found *m children walking in the truth.*

b 1 Kings 18.12.

i 2 Tim. 3.15.

k John 13.

l Jer. 2.2.

m 2 Epiſt. John 4.

Secondly, Becauſe God commends morall and common goodneſſe in the young man *n* in the Goſpell, Chriſt is ſaid to love him for his morall goodneſſe, and naturall ingenuity.

n Mar. 10. 21.

2. The reaſon why it is ſo commendable in a young man to be a good man, is this, becauſe

cauſe their temptations are more, and their affections are ſtronger to carry them from God: youth hath a ſtronger aptitude and proclivity to ſinne then any other age, their blood is ſooner ſtirred up to choler, and their ſtrength to luſt. As every relation hath his ſpeciall ſinne, ſo every age of a mans life; old age is peeviſh and covetous, middle age proud, malicious and revengefull; young men are uſually raſh, luſtfull and voluptuous; and therefore *Paul* bids *o Timothy fly all youthfull luſts:* and therefore ſeeing youth is expoſed to ſo many temptations, and ſubject to ſo many corruptions,——it is rare to ſee young men good.

o 2 Tim. 2. 22.

Oh then be exhorted you that are young, to become religious betimes; and to quicken you hereunto, Conſider,

Uſe 1.

1. If you bee not good in your youth, you can never uſe the Pſalmiſts Arguments, *Caſt me not off O Lord in the time of my old age, forſake me not when my ſtrength faileth, ver. 9.*— and his Argument he had before, *ver. 5. for thou art my hope, and haſt been my truſt from my youth:* and who would be without ſuch an argument on his death-bed?

Pſal. 71. 9. compared with ver. 5.

2. Conſider, there are recorded in Scripture many young men that were good, of all ſorts and conditions, and of all callings; and the holy Ghoſt doth not only ſet downe their goodneſs, but their age in which they were good: *Solomon* a young King, *Obadiah* a young Courtier, *Daniel* a young Propher,

John a young Apostle, *Timothy* a young Preacher, and here *Abijah* a young Prince; and all these were good men, and are recorded for our example and encouragement.

3 Consider, that God in the dispensations of his grace, bestows it upon young men, and passeth by the elder. Thus *Abel* the younger was righteous, and *Cain* wicked: *Jacob* the younger brother loved, and *Esau* hated; Thus *David* the younger of *Jesses* sons, and yet the best of them, and the chosen of the Lord.

1 Sam. 16. 11, 12.

God doth many times do as *Iacob* did when he blessed the children of *Joseph*, he *stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon the head of* Ephraim *the younger*,— so doth God in the dispensation of his grace many times pitch on the youngest: God saith as *Joseph*, of all the rest, *bring me Benjamin*, and gives him a double portion.

Gen. 48. 14

4. The time of your youth is the freest age of your life to betake your selves to the exercise of Religion, and duties of godliness; young men that are servants, have more freedome and less cares then when they grow in years, and the cares and incumbrances of a family fill their hands, and clog their hearts.

1 Cor. 7. 33

5. Consider, if thou art not gratious in youth, the sinnes of thy youth may trouble thy conscience in thy old age. Many young men who are active and venturous in the heat of their youth, get those bodily bruises and blowes, that they feele the ach thereof to their dying day. Thou that givest a blow or

a bruise to thy conscience in thy youth, maiest feel this in thy old age.

Those sinnes which now thou feelest not, may be a trouble to thy conscience, and an aking to thy heart, when thou liest on thy death bed. And though God do not remember the sins of your youth to damn your souls; yet he may make you remember them so as to bee a trouble to your consciences. *r* These things which are the joies of youth, may be the bitter burdens of old age. Take heed of laying a load on thy conscience when thou art young, lest God *write bitter things against thee* when old, *and make thee to possesse the sins of thy youth, and fill thy bones with the sins of thy youth.*

r *Quæ fuerunt inania juventutis gaudia, hæc sunt acerba senectutis gravamina,* Iob 13.26. Iob 29. 11.

A second use of reproofe of two sorts of people. *Use* 2.

First, Of those who instead of being good when young, are wicked when they are young; such as fill their youth with manifold evils. Usually youth is subject to these evils:

1. Pride is the sinne of youth, a Preacher *must not be a* young *novice, lest he be lifted up with pride.* 1 Tim. 3.6

2. Rashness and indiscretion is usually the sinne of a young head. *Exhort* young *men* (saith *Paul* to *Titus*) *to be sober minded*, to be *discreet or wise*; how rash and heady was the *counsellers the* young *men to Rehoboam*, which made him lose his Kingdome? Yeares teach experience. Tit. 2.6 συμφρενεῖν

3. Luſtfulneſſe, which was the ground of *Paul's* caution to *young Timothy*. If *Timothy*, who was ſo abſtemious a man, that *Paul* gave him advice to *drink ſome wine with his water*, had need of this caution, how much more have they that are not ſo exercised in duties of mortification? which gave *Solomon* ground to give that counſell, *Put away the evils of thy fleſh, for childhood and youth are vanity.* He was a young man that followed the harlot to her houſe.

2 Tim. 2 22

Eccl. 11.10 Prov. 7.7.

4. Fickleneſſe and unſetledneſſe of judgement; and therefore in times of errour, the younger ſort are moſt ſubject to be ſeduced; *Children are toſſed to and fro with every wind* of doctrine. The Hebrew cals a young man נער, which comes from נוע, and ſignifies to toſſe to and fro, intimating that they are unſetled and unſtaied in their judgements and reſolutions. How ſoon was the mind of that rich and forward young man changed, mentioned in the Goſpell?

Eph. 4.14.

נוע from נער, *movit de loco in locum*

Mat. 19.22.

5. To ſcoffe and condemn the aged: they were children who did mock the aged Prophet; the young men derided *Job*.

2 Kin. 2.23

Iob 30.1, 12.

6. Senſuall pleaſures and paſtimes: they do rejoice and chear their hearts in the daies of their youth; *Samſon made a feaſt, for ſo uſed the young men to do.*

Eccl. 11.9.

Iudg. 14 10

Secondly, Reproofe lights heavily on thoſe who ſeem to be good in their youth, but in their old caſt off goodneſſe; how many are like *Joaſh*, who ſeemed to bee a good young man

Iob 1.4.

man whilſt he ſeemed to be under the tuition of *Iehoiada*; but when he was dead how did he break out!

How many are there in the world, who have loſt their affection and deſires after God, which they had in their youth? It was a brand ſet upon *Solomon*, who, though when young, *was well taught by his mother*, yet when he grew old, his wives turned away his heart from God. So *David* had his firſt daies which were better then his laſt. Even ſo amongſt us, we have too many, who when they were young did love Religion, and delight in Ordinances, and when they became old have abated exceedingly, which may make them to fear the ſincerity of their goodneſſe; for he that is truly good in youth, will be ſo in his old age. Prov. 31. 1.

A ſecond remarkable circumſtance is this, that this young *Abijah was good in the houſe of Ieroboam.* Whence obſerve,

2. *That it is a great commendation for men to retain their goodneſs whilſt they live in bad places and families*; That this is ſo, we may ſee by that commendable mention the Scriptures make of ſuch as were good in evill places. Thus God commends the Church of *Pergamus*, *I know thy workes, and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satans ſeat is, and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith, even in thoſe daies wherein* Antipas *was my faithfull Martyr, who was ſlain amongſt you, where Satan dwelleth.* *Pergamus* was a Deſt. 2. Rev. 2. 13.

City more given to Idolatry, then all the Cities
Phil. 4.22. of *Asia*, and yet *there were some that held fast the name of Christ, and did not deny his faith*: to be a Saint in *Nero's* family, is very commendable.

And the reason thereof is,

Reas. 1. 1. Because many of Gods children have failed, and abated much of their goodnesse in bad places. How did *Peter* fall in the High Priests Hall? though when in good company he was zealous, yet there he denied Christ. So *Abraham* when he was in *Gerar*, and *Isaac* also denied their wives: so *Joseph* in *Pharaoh's* Court, had learn'd the Court-Oath, to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*. Hence God commands the children of *Israel*, not to mix themselves with the Heathens, *lest they learn their manners and customes*. Bad places are like bad air for zeal to breath in: as sheep amongst briars lose part of their fleece, so good men in bad company, lose part of their goodnesse. As one scabbed sheep may infect a whole flock:
Heb. 12.15. so one root of bitternes may spring up and defile many.

Reas. 2. 2. Because it is a clear evidence of the sincerity of a mans goodness, to be good in a bad place. This shewes thy grace to be grace indeed, when thou hast discouragements to be good and then art holy; this is a demonstration that thou art sincerely good, and that thy goodness is not counterfeit and taken up upon any sinister and hypocriticall end. It is good to be good with the good; but

it

it is moſt excellent to bee good amongſt the bad. and to be beſt amongſt the worſt.

From hence learne the power and unloſableneſs of having grace; grace makes a man good in the worſt times; let a man be caſt into priſon, or bad company (which is the worſt temptation) yet he ſhall not loſe his grace: true grace is compared to oile; now caſt oil into a veſſell of water, and the oile will not mix with the water, but will lie on the top; grace will ſwim upon the water of temptation. As all the water in the ſalt ſea cannot make the fiſh ſalt, ſo all the wicked in the world cannot change the nature of grace; a good man like the fiſh, retains his goodneſs in bad places; thus *Ioſeph* retained his goodneſs in the Court of wicked *Pharaoh*, *Nehemiah* in the Court of *Artaxerxes*, *Obadiah* in *Ahabs* Court, *Daniel* in *Nebuchadnezzars*, the Saints in *Nero's* houſhold, and *Abijah* in wicked and idolatrous *Ieroboam's* houſe. *Uſe.* 1.

Though it be a commendable thing to be good in bad places; yet you ought to bewail your living in bad places: it is your miſery, though not your ſinne; thus did *Iſaiah*, *Wo is me, I am undone; becauſe I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips*; ſo *David*, *Wo is me that I dwell in Meſech, and have my habitation in the tents of Kedar*, i.e. with the ſinfull, idolatrous and barbarous people, the poſterity of *Iſhmael*; thus *Lots righteous ſoule was vexed from day to day*, 2. Iſa. 6. 5. Pſa. 120. 5. 2 Pet. 2. 8.

2 Pet. 2. 7, 8 *day, while he dwelt in Sodom, and saw their unclean conversations.*

3. Hence we may gather, that it is our duty, the more bad the place or family is where God hath cast our calling, the better and more blameleſſe we ſhould labour to be; we ſhall by this adorne our profeſſion, ſtop the mouths of adverſaries, allure and win others to imbrace Chriſtianity. ——*Wee muſt bee* Phil. 2. 15. *blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, amongſt whom yee ſhine as lights in the world.* Stars ſhine brighteſt in a dark night, & fire burneth hotteſt in a cold and froſty day, ſo ſhould thy ſtar of profeſſion ſhine brighteſt in darkeſt places, where thou liveſt, and the fire of thy zeale burn hotteſt in cold times, when the love of many waxes coid.

4. Then certainly it is a vain plea for men to excuſe their wickedneſſe, becauſe they live in bad places; this was *Abrahams* fault to excuſe his lie being at *Gerar*. *Seneca* blames men for laying the fault of their badneſſe on the place where they live: *I am not ambitious by nature, but no man that lives at Rome can be otherwiſe. I am not given to coſtly and rich apparell but I muſt do ſo when I am at Rome.* It is the badneſſe of thy heart, and not the place that makes thee bad: no place, though never ſo good, can exempt a man from ſinne; the Angels ſinned in Heaven, *Adam* in Paradiſe, *Iudas* in Chriſts family, and no place, though never ſo bad, can excuſe a man from ſin.

Gen. 20. 11. *Non ego ſum ambitioſus, ſed nemo Romæ aliter vivere poteſt: non ego ſum ſumptuoſus, ſed urbs ipſa magnas impenſas exigit* Sen.

If

If it be so commendable to be good in bad places, then it is abominable to be bad in good places, to be dirty swine in a faire meadow; Oh how many are good in bad families, who despise good counsels, and hate the duties of Religion in religious families! If it was bad for *Peter* to be evill amongst the High Priests servants, how abominable was it for *Judas* to bee a Traitor amongst the Apostles, and in the family of Christ himselfe! 5.

Delight not to be in bad places and company; to delight in such, argues thou art bad thy selfe. We are to *hate the garment spotted with the flesh*; some expound this, *To avoid the occasions of sin.* But Mr *Perkins* gives this sense, *To hate bad company*, and he saith, it alludes unto the Ceremoniall law, *That if a man had a leprous garment, or a garment any otherwise made unclean, his company was to be avoided.* God therefore gave that command, *Not to plough with an Ox and an Ass together*, the Asse was an unclean creature, and the Oxe was one of the clean beasts, and they must not be in the same yoke; *To note* (say Divines) *that Gods people and prophane persons must not be yoked together.* Though they may occasionally meet together, yet they must not be yoked together; a man may trade with the wickedest man alive, commerce is not forbidden, but our joining with wicked men in a needlesse familiarity. 6.

Bonus mali consortio facilè pejoratur. Iude 23. Lev. 15. 4. Deut. 22. 10 1 Cor. 5. 9, 10. Psa. 26. 4, 5

Keep company with the godly, and delight your selves with such as are good. It is lawfull 7.

lawfull to be in bad company when a juſt occaſion cals, but it is profitable to be in good company. *He that walketh with wiſe men, ſhal be wiſe, but he that is a companion of fools, ſhall be deſtroied.* As a man that comes in a ſhop of perfumes, will carry away the ſent with him: ſo a man by converſing with the godly, ſhall carry away ſome good with him. Labour to chuſe thoſe for thy companions from whom thou maieſt get ſome good: But if God ſhould caſt thee into a houſe like the family of *Jeroboam*, imitate good *Abijah*, of whom it is ſaid, *That in him was found ſome good to the Lord God of Iſrael, even in the houſe of Jeroboam.*

Pro. 13. 20.

Sermon II. At *Lawrence Jury London*, 1650.

1 KING. 14.

part of the 13. verſe.

——Becauſe in him there is found ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael, in the houſe of Ieroboam.

HAving diſpatched the Obſervations which may bee gathered from the circumſtances in the Text, I come to that main Doctrine which I intend to handle, which is;

Doct. *God doth not onely exactly take notice of, but alſo tenderly cheriſh, and graciouſly reward the ſmalleſt beginnings, and weakeſt meaſures of grace*

Grace, which he works in the hearts of his own people.

I might produce a cloud of teſtimonies to confirm this point. Our Saviour Chriſt ſaid, that *hee will not breake the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoaking flax.* Obſerve, it is not ſaid the ſtrong Oak ſhall not be broken, but the *bruiſed reed* ſhall not be broken; nor the light and flaming torch, but the *ſmoaking flax*, ſhall not be quenched.——*Smoaking flax*, where there is but little fire, and much ſmoak of infirmity, yet Chriſt will not quench it, *i.e.* he will cheriſh it; here is the figure *Meioſis*, here is leſſe ſpoken then intended.——He will be ſo farre from quenching, that he will cheriſh the *ſmoaking flax*; as in another place God is ſaid, *that he will not deſpiſe a broken heart*, i.e. He will highly eſteem it.

Mat. 12.

Verba potius ad cor noſtrum quàm ad cor Dei accommodata.

Pſal. 51. 17

Solomon ſpeakes of the fig-tree putting forth her green figs, and the vine with her tender grapes gives a good ſmel; that is, the little meaſure, and weak beginnings of grace in young Converts do pleaſe the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and are as a ſweet ſmell in his noſtrils. Again, Chriſt ſaith, *Let us ſee if the vine flouriſh, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth.* The green buds are regarded by Chriſt, as well as the ripe and grown fruit.

Cant. 2. 13.

Cant. 7. 12.

In opening of the doctrine, I ſhall endeavour to clear theſe two things.

1. That ſome of Gods people have but weake meaſures and ſmall beginnings of grace.

2. Though

2. Though there be but a little grace, yet God wil regard and reward it.

1 Proposition. 1. That ſome of Gods people have but a little grace, —— have but the beginnings of grace wrought in their ſouls.

In the handling whereof are three things,

1. The truth of the Propoſition may bee made good from the ſcriptures.
2. I will lay down notes of diſcovery, to know ſuch as have but ſmall meaſures of grace wrought in them.
3. And then ſhew why God in his wiſedome will not ſuffer his people to bee all of an equall ſtrength and ſtature in grace.

Queſt. 1. 1. *How doth it appeare that ſome of Gods people are but weak in grace?*

Anſw. 1. 1. By the different names and titles that are given unto Chriſtians in holy ſcriptures, arguing they are of different meaſure and growth in grace. 1. Some are called *ſ ſtrong men*, and others *weak*. 2. Some are called *t Babes in Chriſt*, and others called *grown men*. 3. Some are called *Trees of righteouſneſs, Plants of renown, that grow like Cedars in Lebanon:* Others are but a *bruiſed reed*. Some are *x Kids in Chriſts flock and Lambs*. Others *are as the He-goats that goe ſtately before the flock*. 4. Some have grace flaming forth in much zeale and vivacity, they have *y the ſpirit of burning*; and others are but *ſmoaking flax*, i. e. Chriſtians that have much of the ſmoak of infirmity, and but little of the flame of grace. 2. By

ſ Rom. 15. 1.

t 1 Cor. 3. 1 1 Ioh. 2. 13.

u Iſa. 61. 3. Pſal. 92. 12. Mat. 12. 20.

x Cant. 1. 8. Ioh. 21. 15, 16, 17.

y Iſa. 4. 4.

2. By the Analogy that is between ſpirituall and naturall difference of age, ſtrength, and ſtature in man; the Holy Scripture exactly ſets down all the different degrees of grace, under the ſimilitude of the different ages of men. *Anſ.* 2.

1. There is a forming of Chriſt in the heart, and ſo a ſpirituall conception. Gal. 4. 19

2. There are thoſe that are but new-born *Babes* in Chriſt. 1 Pet. 1. 23. & c. 2. 2.

3. There are ſome that are advanced from infancy to be *young men.* 1 Joh. 2. 13.

4. There are ſome that are grown men in Chriſt, *Old men.* — And all this doth but ſet forth the different degrees of grace that are in Chriſtians, ſome having leſſe, ſome more. — In the Chrch of Chriſt, which is his Orchard, there are trees of all ſorts, Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon, with all trees of frankincenſe, Myrre and Aloes, &c. *Brightman* on this Scripture notes, that hereby is meant the ſeverall ſorts of Chriſtians. Spikenard and Saffron are young weak Profeſſors; theſe are tender Plants that ſcarce lift up the head above the ground; Calamus & Cinnamon, which are ſhrubs of two cubits high, note Chriſtians of a middle ſize; & the other trees note Chriſtians of a more eminent meaſure and growth in grace. *ibid.* Cant. 2. 14. *Brightman.*

A ſecond queſtion, *How may a man know himſelfe, that he is but of a little meaſure and ſmall beginning in grace?* *Queſt.* 2.

1. To be much in dependance on duties, argues *Anſ.* 1.

argues thou art but weak in grace. A young Christian is like a young Carpenter, hee makes many chips, and hath many blowes, but doth not make such smooth worke as an experienced Carpenter, who will make fewer chips, and at fewer blowes better work: so young Christians they are much in the use of duty, but they are apt to rely upon duty; they think duties make them Saints, and they are apt to make Saviours of their duties. Young Christians are 1. Affectionate in duties, and 2 Frequent in their duties, 3. And see not their failings in their duties, and so are apt to rest on their duties. As it is a sign of an Apostate professor to cast off duty, so also a note of a young and weak professor to rest too much upon his duties.

Ans. 2. 2. A weak Christian is not clearly insighted into the close and spiritual failings which cleave to his performances. He doth see his gifts, and takes notice of his affections, but he doth not see the vanity of his mind, the unsoundness of his ends, his carnall dependance upon his duty, self-love, and vain glory, but in tract of time a grown Christian doth take notice of these things in himselfe; an experienced Christian will take as much notice of his failing in duty, as of his ability in it. and though hee discern an inlargement of gifts and graces in him at sometimes, yet he still discerns much spirituall pride, popular applause, ostentation of gifts, too much forwardness in setting out his parts, which a weak

weake Chriſtian ſeldome perceives.

Anſ. 3. 3. To have a ſcrupulous conſcience about matters of indifferency argues a weak Chriſtian; for ſo the Apoſtle cals them *weak in the faith* ſuch as did binde the conſcience, when the Scriptures left it free. One Believer thought he might eat any thing, and another doubted of the lawfulneſſe of eating ſundry things. Now thoſe that doubted, the Apoſtle cals *weake; and the weake conſcience is apt to be defiled.* Not to know our liberty, and to abuſe our liberty, is an argument we have but little grace. Young converts make more ſinners then ever God made; they perplex and intangle themſelves in things meerly indifferent. It is true, there ought to be a conſcienc ous tenderneſſe in all Chriſtians: tenderneſſe of conſcience is our duty, but a tormenting, intangling ſcrupulosity is our infirmity: and yet as a weak Chriſtian is better then no Chriſtian, a weak faith is better then a dead faith; ſo a ſcrupulous conſcience is better then a ſeared conſcience.

Rom. 14. 1. & 15, 1.

Rom. 14. 21 1 Cor. 8. 7. & 9. 2.

Anſ. 4. 4. To be ſo intently ſet on the exerciſes of Religion, as to neglect our particular callings, is a ſigne we are but weak in grace. It was a good ſaying of that famous man of God, Dr *Sibbs*, *I like that Chriſtian well, that will hear much and live much, that will pray much and worke much.* In young converts, their affections are ſtrong and ſtirring, and they think they can never hear enough, and they many times doe neglect the duties of their

Dr *Sibbs.*

callings, which doth argue their weakneſſe and infirmity. An experienced grown Chriſtian is regular in his generall and particular calling; ſo as the one ſhall not juſtle and hinder the other.

Anſ. 5. 5. To have mens perſons in admiration, argues weakneſs in grace; ſuch were the *Corinthians*, who had mens perſons in admiration: the Apoſtle cals them *children*, *babes*, and poor, low, and carnall Chriſtians: *Babes*, though they had the life of Chriſtians, yet they had but little of the ſtrength of Chriſtians.—— *They were carnall, they ſavoured more of the fleſh then of the ſpirit.* Ignorance is often a cauſe of admiration; weake Chriſtians who have but little knowledge, are apt to be ſo taken with mens perſons, that one cries, *I am of Paul*, and another, *I am of Apollo*, and ſo fall into the ſin condemned, of having the faith of Chriſt with reſpect of perſons, to cry up one Miniſter, and to cry down others. To idolize ſome, and to deſpiſe others, argues that thou art weak in faith. A ſolid Chriſtian loves all good Miniſters, and can contemn none.

1 Cor. 3. 1, 4

James 2. 1. Ἀνθρωποληψία.

Anſ. 6. 6. To be eaſily ſeduced, and led away into errour, argues but weakneſs in grace. Thoſe the Apoſtle cals *children, who are toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every winde of doctrine*. Weakneſs of head doth argue that grace is not very ſtrong in the heart. The way not to fall from our ſtedfaſtneſs, is to *grow in grace*; for the Apoſtle *Peter* doth joyn thoſe

Eph. 4. 14.

those two duties together, having given a caution, *ver.* 17. *not to fall from stedfastnesse*; *ver.* 18. he gives counsell *to grow in grace*: strong Christians are stedfast, whereas weak ones are inconstant; and therefore those Professors that have been whirl'd about with divers opinions, it is an evidence that they have but weak grace, if any. 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18.

7. Such as are onely acquainted with the common Principles of Religion, without further search into the depths and mysteries of Religion.——There are some Professors who may bee fitly stiled babes in Christ, because they have need of *milke*, being *unskilfull* in the Word of righteousness, that is, in the more solid doctrines of the Gospell, concerning Christ, who is our righteousness. Thus the Disciples and Apostles of Christ knew but little of the mystery of our Redemption at first, and were ignorant concerning *a* the *Passion* of Christ, of the *b Resurrection*, as also of the *c Ascension* of Christ, till the Holy Ghost came and taught them these things, and brought those things to remembrance, that Christ had taught. *Ans.* 7. Heb. 5. 12, 13. *a* Lu. 9. 45. *b* Mar. 9. 10 *c* Iohn 16. 15, 17.

8. Weak Christians are strong in affections, and not in judgement; they have usually more heat then light: young Christians are like young horses, they have much mettle, but are not so fit for a journey, because they are not so through-paced: there are many Christians that have much zeale and affection, but are not so solid in their judgements; but *Ans.* 8.

this argues much weakneſſe in grace.

Anſ. 9. 9. A weake Chriſtian is one that cannot bear reproofe. Sharp weather will diſcover whether thou art of a weake or ſound body; —ſo a ſharp reproofe will diſcover whether thou art of a weak ſpirituall temper and conſtitution. When *Nathan* came to *David*, hee could beare the reproof, though the Prophet told him to his face, *He was the man that had ſinned*; but *Aſa*, though a good man, could not endure the faithfull reproof of a Prophet, but *was wroth with the Seer, and put him in the priſon-houſe.*

2 Sam. 12, 7

2 Chr. 16. 10.

Anſ. 10. 10. A weak beleever is one that can truſt God for his ſoule, but not for his body.—— So Jeſus Chriſt argues, that thoſe had *little faith*, who did expect heaven and happineſſe from God their father, and durſt truſt him with their ſouls and eternall concernments, and yet durſt not truſt him for food and raiment. There are thoſe that dare truſt God for heaven, and yet not truſt him for earth; but theſe are ὀλιγόπιστοι, *of little faith*. The Diſciples when they wanted bread, began to reaſon amongſt themſelves how they ſhould be ſupplyed.—— *O yee of little faith* (ſaith Chriſt) *why do you thus reaſon?* Can you truſt me for the bread of eternall life, and dare you not truſt me for the bread of this life?

Mat. 6. 30.

ὀλιγόπιστοι.

Mat. 16 8.

Uſe 1. Be not then diſcouraged, you that diſcerne in your ſelves but ſmall meaſures of grace; look on your wants and imperfections, ſo as to grow in grace, and not to be content with any

any measure: But look not on the small beginnings in grace, as discouragement to you. When you see in a field a great Oak, you may say this great tree was once but a small acorn. Those Christians who are now but smal sprigs, may hereafter be tall Cedars: say to thy soul, though I am but weak, yet I shall be strong: grace where it is true, will be growing, the *smoaking flax* may bee a burning and shining lamp in Gods Candlestick: and therefore as you must not bee content with the greatest measure of grace; so neither be discouraged with the least measure of Grace. A graine of mustard seed may grow a great tree.

Content not your selves with small measures of grace; a little of the world will not content you.——In the womb a foot contents us, three foot in the Cradle, and seven foot in the grave: but betwixt the Cradle and the grave, a whole world will not contents us, and shall a little grace content us? For wealth and desire of it, thou art as the Horse-leech which cries, give, give, and as the grave that never saith, It is enough; and for grace wilt thou be content with a little?

1 KING. 14.
part of the 13. verſe.

Sermon III At Lawrence Jury, London, March 16, 1650.

——*Becauſe in him there is found ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael, in the houſe of Jeroboam.*

WE have given ſome Scripture-Characters of thoſe that have a little grace, now wee proceed to reſolve a third queſtion.

Queſt. 3. 3. Queſt. *Why doth God ſo order and ordain it, that among his own people, all ſhall not be of an equall ſtature in Chriſt, but there are of them ſome in whom there ſhall be but the beginnings of grace found?*

Anſw. *Anſw.* It is true, it is not with Regeneration as it was in the Creation; it is not with the Trees of Righteouſneſs, as it was with the Trees of Paradiſe, which were created all perfect at the firſt: but it is not ſo in the Work of Grace, we are not perfectly ſanctified, not at once, but we perfect holineſs in the feare of God, and that by degrees; and God hath given to ſome of his people but ſmall beginnings and meaſures of grace, and that for theſe reaſons.

1. To put a difference between our eſtate on earth, and our being in heaven. In heaven we ſhall all have an equall ſtature in grace, though

though it be disputed that there are different degrees of glory. But in heaven the *spirits of just men* shall all be *made perfect*, and there we shall all come unto the *measure of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ*. All beleevers here are justified by God alike. God doth not acquit the strong, and hold guilty the weak, but justification is alike to all, but our Sanctification is not alike; but when we come to heaven, our Sanctification shall be then as our Justification is now, that is, perfect and equall, we shall have not only a perfection of parts, but of degrees. Heb. 12, 23. Eph. 4 13.

2. This is to make men live in a continuall dependance upon divine influx and supplies from the spirit of God. If children should bee born perfect men as *Adam* was created, we should not then see that continuall need of, and dependance on our Parents. Wee are bred in the wombe, and afterward born in the world, and then by degrees grow up from stature to stature; and so it is in grace, God deals thus.——Converting grace doth not make us so perfect as we shall bee afterward. At the first creation he made the trees all fruitfull, and at their full growth; but now 'tis otherwise, they are first kernels or seeds, then plants, before they are grown trees, and they have dependance on the influences of heaven: so we are first babes, then young men, and then strong men in Christ, to keep our souls in a dependance on Gods grace.

3. For the greater ornament of the myſticall body of Chriſt. In a naturall body, if every member ſhould be of an equall bigneſs, the body would be monſtruous: but the body is ſo proportioned in its diffrent members, that the leſſer becomes ſerviceable to the greater, and ſo they all orderly diſcharge their mutuall operations. As in Muſick there would be no harmony, if the ſtrings were all of an equall bigneſſe; but one ſtring being the baſe, and the other the treble, that makes the Muſick to bee more melodious: ſo it is in grace, the different degrees of grace makes the body of Chriſt more harmonious. It is here as in ſome curious piece of needle-work; if all the ſilks were of one colour, it would not ſet out the worke with ſo much luſtre and amiableneſs, as the variety of colours will do.

4. To make Gods people ſee a neceſſity of maintaining fellowſhip and communion together, to edifie and build up each other. There would be no need of Chriſtian diſcourſe and holy fellowſhip, did not our weaknes ſe require it. As among the members of the body God hath ſo ordered them, that each member is ſerviceable to another: *the eie cannot ſay to the hand, I have no need of thee:* ſo among the people of God, ſome being weake, others ſtrong, there is a neceſſity of maintaining communion together. There is an inſtinct in nature, that things weake in themſelves, cleave to thoſe things which are ſtronger then they. *The Conies are but a feeble*

1 Cor. 12. 21.

Pro. 30. 26.

flocke,

flock, yet make they their houſes in the rock; among *birds*, the *Dove* the ſillieſt and moſt ſhiftleſſe creature, yet ſhe hides her ſelf in *the clefts of the rock*; the *Vine* among the trees the weakeſt, yet it clings to the wall; the *Hops* among the plants, yet it twines about the pole. So God hath ordered it in his infinite Wiſdome, that ſome Chriſtians ſhould bee ſtronger, and ſome weaker in grace, that the ſtrong may help the weake, and each be ſerviceable to one another. Cant. 2. 14.

5. To ſet out the glory of God in all his glorious attributes.

1. This different ſize of grace in Chriſtians, doth glorifie the mercy of God, and the free grace of God, who when there are ſome Chriſtians that have but a little grace, yet God rewards thoſe ſmall meaſures of grace with great meaſures of glory.

2. This magnifies the power of God, who when we are weak, yet the great God manifeſts his power in our weakneſſe; yea, *his ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſſe*. And therefore *Paul* adds, *verſe* 10. *For when I am weake, then am I ſtrong*, that is, *in Chriſt*. Is it not a demonſtration of great power, to keep a ſmall ſparke of fire, that it ſhall not be quenched in a flood of water; yet behold that little ſparke of grace in thee ſhall not be quenched in thee by the flood and torrent of thy corruptions. It is by Gods power that the leaſt meaſure of grace ſhall bee preſerved. There is not ſo much of Gods power ſeen 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. Ver. 10.

seen in preserving the Angels, as a weak believer; for the Angels, though mutable, yet are perfect creatures, they have no weights of sinnes and corruptions to pull them down. But alas, we have such a byas and inclination to sinne, that we are apt to bee turned aside from God every moment. The power of God is more seen in preserving a poor believer in the state of grace, then in preserving the Angels in the state of innocency. And as Gods power is seen in preserving of a little grace, so also is it seen in the increasing of small grace. Grace is like to that cloud which the Prophets servant saw, *which at first was but like a mans hand*, but afterwards *it overspread the whole heavens*. True grace is of a spreading and increasing nature, and therefore the increase of our graces may bee shadowed out in the vision of the waters of the Sanctuary, which at first were but *to the ankles*, after that *to the knees*, then *to the loyns*, and at last so deep that they could *not be passed over*.

1 Kings 18. 44. 45.

Ezek. 47. 3. 4. 5.

3. God doth hereby glorifie his wisdome. As Gods Wisdome is demonstrated in the world by the variety of creatures, which are not all of the same bulke and bignesse, but some bigger and some lesser: so in the Church of God, his wisdome appeares, that some Christians are of greater, and some of a lesser measure of grace. Search the whole Creation and you shall finde the wisdome of God in the variety of Creatures. In the heavens

vens there are the greater and leſser lights, and ſo Stars of different magnitude doe beautifie and beſpangle the heavens: ſo in the ſea there are greater and leſser fiſhes: in the air the great Eagle, and little Sparrow: on the earth the Elephant and little Dog: amongſt the creeping things, there's the great Serpent, and the little Piſmire: amongſt the Vegetables, the tall Cedar and the Hyſop on the wall: And alſo amongſt the rational creatures, there is a Giant and a Dwarfe; a grown man of a tall ſtature, and a child but of a ſpan long. So is Gods wiſdome greatly illuſtrated, that as there is variety of naturall proportions in the world, ſo there are various proportions of grace in his Church amongſt his children.

Before I come to apply this point, which is of very great uſe to Gods children, for their comfort, I ſhall lay downe ſome generall Poſitions about ſmall meaſures of grace.

1. That in the Church there are found more weak Chriſtians then ſtrong, more young converts, then old and grown Chriſtians. *Poſit.* 1.

As in a Forreſt there are more young ſprouts then old trees, in a garden more young ſlips then old roots, in the world more young children then old men. In *Niniveh* there were 120000 Infants, but there was not ſuch a number of old men. *By how much things are perfect, by ſo much they are the fewer.* Look amongſt other creatures, thoſe Ion. 4. 11. *Quò perfectiores, eò pauciores.*

that

that are of a bigger bulk, are of a leſſer number, as in the ſea there are more young and little fiſh, then great whales; on the earth the
Ier.46.23 ſmalleſt things are innumerable; in the aire there are more ſwarms of flies, then flocks of birds: ſo in the Church of God there are more that are young and weake converts, then old Chriſtians. It is with moſt Chriſtians as it
1 Sam 20. 36. was with *Jonathan's* ſignal arrowes which he ſhot to warne *David* by, of which two fell ſhort, and but one beyond the mark: ſo where one Chriſtian ſhoots home *to the mark for the price of the high calling in Chriſt Jeſus*, there are many fall ſhort.

Poſit. 2. That there are many that have but weake meaſures and ſmall beginnings of grace, who have been a long time under the profeſſion of Religion, and under the meanes of grace, ſuch were the Hebrews, *who for the*
Heb.5.12. *time that they ought to be teachers, yet had need that one ſhould teach them again, which be the firſt principles of the Oracles of God, and are become ſuch as have need of milke, and not of ſtrong meat*; and I may accommodate to this purpoſe that ſpeech of Chriſt, *Many that are*
Mat.19.30. *firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt ſhall be firſt.* There are many who went out early, and took as it were the firſt ſtep in Profeſſion of Religion; and yet others have over-gone them, who went out after them. Many who have but weak meaſures of grace, have been of long ſtanding under the meanes of grace. And therefore Chriſtians are not to judge the ſtrength

ſtrength of grace by their profeſſion, but by their proficiency; It is not how many yeares you have been Profeſſors; but what experience and judgement have you gotten under Ordinances.

That the ſmalleſt meaſures of grace cannot merit eternall life and glory, becauſe great meaſures cannot. In merit there ought to be a proportion; but between grace and glory there is none: our ſervices are imperfect, our ſalvation is perfect; our ſervices but momentany, our glory is eternall: there is no compariſon between our light duties and eternall weight of glory. The Church in the *Canticles* is deſcribed according to the ſeverall parts of her body: *Her voice is ſweet, her countenance comely, and her Doves eies are beautifull. Behold thou art fair my Love* (ſaith Chriſt) *thou haſt Doves eyes, thy cheeks are comely with rows of Jewels, and thy neck with chains of Gold.* Now it is very obſerveable, that though Chriſt commends the Churches *Eies, her Hair, her Teeth, her Lips and Speech, her Temples her Breſts and Necke, &c.* yet he doth not commend her Hands, to ſhew that though ſhe be adorned with many graces, as with ſo many beautifull Ornaments and comely Lineaments, yet ſhee merits nothing at the hands of Chriſt by all her doings. *The Churches beauty is perfect through the comelineſſe of Chriſt.*

Poſit. 3.

Miſerationes Dei ſunt merita noſtra.

Deus coronat non merita noſtra, ſed dona ſua.

Cant. 2. 14.

1. 15.

Ver. 10.

Cant. 4. 1. 2, 3, 4, &c.

Eze. 16. 14.

That Believers ought not to reſt ſatisfied with the ſmall meaſures of grace they have received

Poſit. 4.

received: Though a little grace may bring you to heaven, yet you are not to take up therewith; but if you have got a little grace, labour for more: and to quicken you hereunto, consider,

1. Small measures of grace are not so sensible and evidentiall to your selves, little things, because they are little, are not seen. There may bee a little dust hovering up and down in the aire, yet because it is small, we see it not: this is the reason why Christians doubt; grace is little, and therefore it is not discerned. Compare *Mat.*8.24. with *Mar.*4.40. and we shall find that in *Matthew* Christ saith in his reproofe to his Disciples, *O ye of little faith:* and in *Marke*, *How is it that yee have no faith?* You may from the variety of these expressions gather this, that a *little faith* unexercised, as to comfort, is as good as no faith: it was so little, it was as good as none in that particular exigence they were in; you may have a little grace, and yet as to comfort, that little and weake grace may not further thee in a way of strong consolation. Not but that a weake Christian is accepted, that the weaker Christian may lye in his fathers bosome;——yet is it the strength of grace that gives us strong consolation.

Mat.8.24. comp. with Mar.4.40.

2. Consider that small measures of grace, though they may bring you to heaven, yet they are not so usefull to others; a weake Christian cannot do much good in a Christian converse, because they want judgement and

and experience in the waies of God: and therfore ſuch are not to be received to *doubtfull diſputations*, but are to bee borne withall. Spirituall and ſtrong Chriſtians are moſt uſefull. Young converts are not fit for ſome exerciſes about Religion; they are not fit to ſtrengthen others. *When thou art converted ſtrengthen thy brethren:* it is not to be underſtood of his firſt converſion, but of his progreſſe in Religion: as if Chriſt had ſaid, when thou art ſtrengthened thy ſelfe, ſtrengthen thy brethren. ——— There are ſome duties which young converts are not fit for: *A piece of new cloth is not fit for a new garment, neither old bottles fit for new wine. Pareus* and moſt Expoſitors refer that place to that caſe of conſcience, *Why Chriſts diſciples did not faſt often:* ——They were like old and weak bottles, and ſo were not fit for that ſtrong duty, which was as new wine, and would be apt to break them. Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, *That he had many things to ſay unto them, which in regard of their weakneſs they were not then able to bear.*

Rev. 14. 1. & 15. 2 Gal. 4. 1.

Luke 22. 32

Mark 16. 16, 17. *Pareus.*

Verſe 14.

Ioh. 16. 12.

3. Nor are ſmall meaſures of grace ſo honourable to God; God is *glorified* when his people *bear much fruit*. Much means and pains and little fruit, is a ſhame to the vine-dreſſer: and therefore beleevers muſt not reſt ſatisfied with ſmall meaſures of grace.

Ioh. 15. 8.

It is our duty to improve thoſe ſmall meaſures of grace which God hath given us. And conſider, *As he that is faithfull in a little,*

Poſit. 9.

Lu.19.17. tle, *God will make him ruler over much.* Use of grace will increase it;——yet if thy grace bee increased, ascribe all to God, it is Gods *pound*, and not thy *pains* hath gained.

Use 1. 1. *Use* is of comfort to weak Christians, to those young *Abijahs*, in whom there is found but some little good. Let such know to their comfort,

1. Though their grace be but little in quantity, yet it is much in value. A pearle, though but little in substance, yet it is of great worth. so a little grace is of great value: *the heart of a wicked man is nothing worth:* you may have much knowledge, and seeming grace, but no true worth. A shop full of barrels will not make a man rich, unlesse those vessels be full of commodities: gifts as to heaven are but the lumber of a Christian; it is grace that makes him rich towards God.

2 Though thy grace be little for the present, yet it will grow for the future to a greater measure. The *little grain of mustard seed (the least of seeds)* will in time grow up to a tree. Grace is fitly compared to *leaven*, which is of a spreading nature: to the *cloud* which the Prophets servant saw, and to the *waters of the Sanctuary*, which did all increase. An infant of daies shall proceed by degrees, till he become like the *ancient of daies, perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect.* Naturallists observe, that the seeds of the Cypresse tree are very small, and yet of them proceeds a very high tree: Such is the birth and growth of grace.

Mat.13.31, 32. Ver.33. 1 Ki.18.44. Ezek.47. 3,4.

Arbor procera Cypressus.

3. The

3. The little meaſure of grace once begun in the ſoul ſhall be perfected.——*God wil not breake the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax, until judgement be perfected in victory.* By *judgement* is meant there, the work of *Sanctification*, till that comes to be prevalent over corruption. *Paul* was confident, that he that *had begun a good work in them, would finiſh it, unto the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* The Lord *is faithful and will do it.* God hath commanded us to *go on to perfection*, and hee doth not command impoſſibilities. God blames men of folly, in not proceeding *to finiſh when they have begun to build.* God will never begin to reare up a ſtructure of grace, and never finiſh it.——Beſides, God hath promiſed *to perfect that which concerns his ſervants.*

Mat. 12. 20.

Phil. 1. 6. 1 The. 5. 24 Heb. 6. 1.

Luke 14. 28. 29.

Pſa. 138. 8.

4. The weakeſt Chriſtian hath grace alike for quality, though not for quantity; though thy grace be not ſo much, yet it is as true as others: though but a convert of yeſterday, yet grace as true as of an old ſtander in Religion. ——*Faith is alike precious* in all believers, for quality, though not for quantity.

2 Pet. 1. 1.

Faith in all beleevers is alike:

1. In reſpect of the Author, God.
2. The Object, it holds upon the ſame Chriſt.
3. The meanes of working it are the ſame, *viz.* the Word and Spirit. A little grace is true grace. Fire in the ſparke is as well fire as the flame: the filings of gold are gold, as well as the whole

wedge, a drop of water is water, as well as the whole Ocean. A little grace is true grace.

4. The end, it hath the ſame ſalvation of ſoule, 1 *Pet.* 1. 9.

5. God wil not put your weak grace to triall beyond your ſtrength; *God will debate with it in meaſure; he will ſtay his rough wind in the day of his Eaſt-wind.* —— Thou ſhalt not have ſuch boiſterous ſtormes of temptation, as a ſtrong Chriſtian. —— *God will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able.* God will take care *that the ſpirit ſhall not faile.*

Iſa. 27. 8.

1 Cor. 10. 13
Iſa. 57. 16.

6. Take this for your comfort, the leaſt meaſure of grace is enough to bring you to heaven. This is not ſpoken to make you idle, but only to comfort a perplexed conſcience. Many becauſe their grace is weak, they think they have no grace. *I have ſet before thee* (ſaith Chriſt to the Church of *Philadelphia*) *an open door, and no man can ſhut it, for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name.* It is true, our comfort lies much in the comparative degree, but our ſalvation in the poſitive degree; ſtrong grace hath ſtrong comfort; much faith will bring thee with much comfort to heaven; but a little faith will bring thee ſafely to heaven.

Rev. 3. 8.

1 Kings

1 KING. 14.
part of the 13. verſe.

——*Becauſe in him there is found ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael, in the houſe of Jeroboam.*

Sermon IIII. At Lawrence Jury, London, March 16. 1650.

A caſe of conſcience reſolved.

BEfore wee come to the uſe of Cautiun, I ſhall here ſtate a caſe of Conſcience, which is this, *That if amongſt Gods people there are ſome found that have but little grace, and but ſmall meaſures found in them; Then what is the leaſt meaſure of grace, leſſe then which, a man cannot be ſaid to be in the ſtate of grace?*

This is a practicall and uſefull caſe.

Firſt: This is of great uſe to Chriſtians, who are but of a lower form in Religion, and have but little grace; yet they may know that little they have: and though they have not attained ſtrength of grace; yet they may know the truth of grace in themſelves: and although they come ſhort of ſtrong beleevers, yet they ſhall hereby know they goe beyond the hypocrite: for the leaſt meaſure of grace is better then the greateſt meaſure of gifts.

Secondly, the knowledge of this will quicken the ſoule unto due endeavours after a further increaſe. This will teach them *to abound more and more.* 1 Theſ. 4. 1

Now that wee may discover what is the lowest degree of true grace, wee shall shew you it in some of these following particulars.

1. A light in the soule to see the evill and the mischievous nature of sin, though not an ability to mortifie sin. The *entrance* of Gods Word *giveth light, and giveth understanding to the simple*: that is the first worke of the Word upon the soule, the very beginning of converting grace; in the heart is light, whereby thou seest sin and its sinfulnesse. As it was in the first creation, the first thing that was created, was light: so in the second creation, the first work is *to open the eies of the blind, and to turn them from darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan to God.* Upon the work of conversion in the soule, the first degree of grace is to be inlightned with the *light of the living*. So that where this light is wanting, there cannot be a work of grace.

Psal. 119.

Acts 26. 18.

Iob 33. 30.

2. A setled and fixed purpose of heart to leave sinne, and to cleave unto God. Grace doth not consist so much in an actuall mortifying of sin, as in an unfeigned and setled purpose of heart to leave every sin.

The Prodigals resolution, to goe to his fathers house, argued some grace in him. I *will arise and go to my fathers house*; that is, I will leave my wicked company and courses: and it is said, *His father saw him afarre off, and ran and met him.* The Lord did work in him a purpose to leave his sin. *Greg.* on this place saith,

Luke 15. 17, 18.

faith. *That remiſſion of ſin came to his heart before his Confeſſion brake out in his ſpeech to his father.* So *David, I acknowledged my ſin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I ſaid I will confeſſe my tranſgreſſion to the Lord and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.* *Auguſtine* obſerves on this place, *That David doth not ſay, he did confeſs; but he purpoſed to confeſſe his ſin,* and yet this his purpoſe was true grace, though one of the leaſt meaſures of grace. That holy purpoſe of *David* argued grace in him, when he ſaid, *I have purpoſed and will not tranſgreſſe thy law, I have ſworn and will performe it, that I will keep thy righteous judgements.* It argues grace when a ſoul doth *cleave unto the Lord with full purpoſe of heart.*

Greg.

Pſal. 32. 5.

Auguſt.

Pſal. 17. 3.

Pſ. 119. 106.

Acts 11. 23.

3. Another low meaſure of grace is this; A ſenſible complaint of the want of grace, Thus he that came to Chriſt, and ſaid with tears, *Lord I beleeve, help thou my unbeliefe,* he had grace. He doth not ſay, Lord help my faith, but *Lord help thou my unbeliefe.* His expreſſion about his unbelief, did note not only his want, but his ſenſibleneſſe of his want. This is that *Poverty of Spirit,* which hath the firſt place in the Beatitudes; this is the loweſt round of the ladder. The Apoſtle tels us, *that the ſpirit helps our infirmities, in ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered.* Obſerve here, that its not ſaid, the Spirit helps us with comforts and joies, but *with ſighs and groans,* whence we may learn, that the Spirits help is as well *in ſighs and groanes* and ſenſible com-

Mar. 9. 24.

Mat. 5. 3.

Rom. 8. 26.

plaints of our wants, as in holy raviſhments. Strength of grace is ſeen in holy joies and raviſhments of Spirit, but truth of grace may bee ſeen and diſcerned in ſighs, groanes and complaints of our wants; they are ſaid to be *ſighs and groans which cannot be uttered*, not in regard of their greatneſſe; but (as Mr *Perkins* obſerves) in regard of their weakneſſe. *Gods children firſt wanting ability to expreſſe their own thoughts.* To be ſenſible of the want of grace, is grace; for nature cannot make a man duly ſenſible of the want of grace, nor ſenſibly to complain of that want.

Perkins. *Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes ſtupent.*

4. Earneſt deſires after more grace, argues there is grace in the ſoule, though it bee but ſmal. I do not place the beginning of grace in an ability to exerciſe grace; but rather in an earneſt deſire after grace. Deſire after grace, is accounted by God the grace it ſelfe we deſire; for ſo we find that *Nehemiahs* deſire to feare the Lord, is counted for actuall fearing God. Deſires are the ſeeds of grace, and the graces themſelves are the bloſſomes and ſweet fruit that ſpring from thence; grace exerciſed is the fruit of a holy deſire after grace.

Neh. 1. 11. compared with Neh. 5. 15.

That the deſires after grace is in Gods acceptation, grace may be thus demonſtrated.

1. Gods people have appealed unto God, concerning the uprightneſſe of their hearts, meerly by their deſires——ſo ſaith the Church. *The deſire of our ſoul is to thy name, and the remembrance of thee; and with my ſoul*

Iſa. 26. 8, 9.

ſoule have I deſired thee in the night.

2. God hath made many gracious promiſes, not only to the acting and exerciſing of grace, but to the deſires after grace. *Bleſſed are they that doe hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſſe, for they ſhall be filled.*——*If any man thirſt* (ſaith Chriſt) *let him come unto me and drinke*; nay there is a generall and univerſall invitation *to every one that thirſteth to come to the waters*; and God hath promiſed *to give to him that is athirſt of the fountain of the water of life freely.* The Lord hath promiſed *to fulfill the deſire of thoſe that feare him, and wil hear the deſire of the humble.* So that by theſe promiſes it doth appeare, that *hungring* and *thirſting*, and deſires after grace, are graces in Gods account and acceptation.

Mat 5.6.

Iohn 7.37

Iſa.55.1.

Rev.21.6.
Pſa.145.19
Pſal.10.17.

Now leſt men ſhould reſt in lazy and ſluggiſh deſires, and thereby neglect the exerciſe of grace, I ſhall give you an account in what ſenſe the Scripture reckons upon deſires after grace, to be grace.

1. They are ſupernatural deſires. 'Tis true, there are naturall deſires in the ſoule after that which is good,——it is the language of nature, *Who will ſhew us any good?* now theſe deſires may and doe ariſe from the motion of the naturall and unſanctified will of man; and theſe deſires are after happineſſe, and not after holineſſe: ſuch were the deſires of *Balaam*, who ſaid, *Let me dye the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.* This was but a naturall deſire. But true deſires in

Pſalm.4.6.

Num.23.

the soule after heaven, for holinesse sake *Bernard* notably sets out these desires of naturall men, *That they have a desire of the End, and not of the means.*

Voluntatem finis, non mediorum. Bern.

2. *Desires* after grace are joined with holy *endeavours*; and therefore the Apostle joins *desire* and *zeale* together; to intimate that *true desires* are alwaies joined with *zealous endeavours*. Thus the Apostle also joineth a *readinesse of will*, and *performance* together. God will never accept the *will* for the *deed*, unless there bee an endeavour to performe what wee say wee are willing to doe. And therefore *Solomon* rightly describes, how pernicious desires are without indeavours. *The desires of the slothfull* (saith he) *kill him, because his hands refuse to labour. Bernard* describes lazinesse to the life: *Carnall men love to obtain, but love not to follow Christ: they will not endeavour to seek him whom they desire to find.*

2 Cor. 7. 11

2 Cor. 8. 11

Pro. 21. 25.

Carnales cupiunt Christum consequi sed non sequi; non curant quærere quem desiderant invenire. Bern.

3. Desires that are true and gracious, are unsatisfiable; thus *David* speaks of his desires: *My soul* (saith he) *breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgements at all times*; yea, he further describes the ardency and unsatisfiablenesse of his desires, by the *Harts panting after the water-brooks.* The Hart is naturally the most thirsty of all creatures, but this thirst is much increased when the poor beast is chased with dogs: even so the true desires of the soul after grace, are earnest, ardent and vehement desires.

Psal. 119. 20

Psal. 42. 1.

2 Cor. 7. 11

4. You

4. You may know true deſires after grace by their object. Deſires they are not gracious, if they bee more after outward things then after God. So *David, My ſoule thirſteth after God, after the living God, My ſoul thirſteth for thee. my fleſh longeth after thee in a dry and thirſty land where no water is.* Thus his ſoul longed, *and did breake* with longing after Gods judgements. —Now therefore wouldeſt thou know whether thou haſt any beginning of grace in thy ſoule, examine what thy deſires are; perhaps thou canſt not pray, but thou deſireſt to pray: perhaps thou canſt not mourne for ſinne, but doſt thou mourne that thou canſt not mourne? Perhaps thou doſt not beleeve, (as thou feareſt) but doſt thou deſire to beleeve? Perhaps thou canſt not repent, but doſt thou deſire to repent, and doſt thou labour to repent? Then thou maieſt conclude, that thou haſt ſome beginnings of true grace in thy ſoule.

Pſ.1,42,2. Pſal.63.1. Pſa.119,20.

5 Wee may know the truth of grace though it bee little, by the earneſt deſire after the Word and the means of grace. Thus *Peter* ſets forth our deſires, *As new born babes deſire the fincere milke of the word, that ye may grow thereby.* There is in a child a naturall inſtinct as ſoon as ever it is borne, to ſeeke after the mothers breſt: the Apoſtle makes it a reſemblance of a ſpirituall man, a man ſpiritually new borne, will deſire after the Word, the meanes of grace, that he may grow in grace.

1 Pet.2.2.

6. An

6. An indeared love to those that have grace. *By this you know you are past from death to life, because you love the brethren.* Casuists upon this text, say that love to Gods children is the first grace, and first appeares in young converts. The Natives in New *England*, it is observed upon their conversion, (for God hath begun there to bring some of those poor creatures *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to himselfe*;) the first appearance of grace in them, is in their love and respect of those that are truly gracious. Thus I have shewed you an answer to the question, what are the least measures of grace, without which, or some of them, a man cannot be said to have grace, and wheresoever any of these are, that mans condition is safe, and these little measures of grace will bring a man to heaven.

1 Iohn. 3. 14

I shall here lay down some cautions to prevent misapplication.

1 *Caution*

Though these small measures of grace are saving, yet you must not content your selves with them. Take heed, lest what I have said for the support of the weakness of some Christians, become not a pillow for the idleness of others; *But let us strive to go on unto perfection.* We must not sit down with any measure of grace. And to perswade you hereunto:

Heb. 6. 1.

1. Consider that things meerly necessary and sufficient to maintain a naturall life, will not content a man: what man is content, though

though hee hath clothes enough to hide his nakednesse, and food enough to keep life and soul together? ——But hee desires not only clothes for nakednesse, but ornament, and not only food for hunger and necessity, but delight. Now shall men be unbounded in their desires for outward things, and shall they sit down and say they have enough for heavenly things?

2. Consider, if thou contentest thy selfe with a small measure of grace, though thou shalt have the fruit of thy grace when thou diest; yet thou wilt want the comfort of thy grace whilest thou livest. It is strength of grace that gives assurance. Weak grace will bring thy soule to heaven, but it is the strength of grace will bring heaven into thy soul. *The work of Righteousnesse shall bee peace, and the effect of righteousnesse shall be quietness and assurance for ever.* A child of God hath seldome peace and comfort from the habit of Righteousnesse, but from the exercise of Righteousnesse. *He that lacketh those things (saith Peter) is blind and cannot see afarre off, &c.* This is not spoken of wicked men who have no grace, but of such who have grace; and because they exercise it not, doe not discern the comfortable fruits of grace in their souls. A little faith unexercised, is as to comfort (as wee have shewed) as good as no faith. ——They that adde not to the stocke of grace, will want the comfort of grace. So that a weak Christian, who is compared by *Peter*

Isa. 32, 17.

2 Pet. 1. 9, 10, 11.

Mat. 8. 26; compared with Mark 4. 40.

2 Pet. 1. 9. μυωπάζοντες.

Peter to a purblind man: *He cannot see* (because the eie-sight of his faith is weak) *afar off*; he cannot see his name writ in heaven; ——He will want the comfortable evidence of grace in his heart, who contents himselfe with measures of grace.

2 *Caution*

The second Caution is; Take not those things to be evidences of the *truth* of grace, which are evidences only of the *growth* and *strength* of grace. *Weak converts* doe involve themselves in a Labyrinth of misery, in judging themselves by those symptomes, which are evidences only of the *strength* of grace. Thou must not judge thy selfe whether thou art in the state of grace by this; as whether thou hast ravishing joies, and comforts of the holy Ghost; these are things that God indulgeth to some few, and those of a long standing in the School of Christ. In a *School*, a scholar must not compare himselfe with one of the highest Forme: if thou wouldest judge of the truth of thy grace, judge by the lowest measure. The reason why hypocrites and low-forme Christians doe mistake, is this, Hypocrites judge they have grace, because they have gifts; and weak Christians judge they have no grace because they doe not finde such measures of grace in them as are in others. We do not use to say, it is not day, because it is not noon. ——It is unthankfulnesse to God, and uncharitablenes to our selves, to argue a nullity of grace from the weakness of it; and therefore if thou canst

canſt not ſay, I ſee my grace, yet it's well thou canſt ſay, Bleſſed be God, I ſee my ſin; if thou canſt not ſay that thou leaveſt ſin, yet it's well if thou canſt ſay, I have a full purpoſe of heart to do ſo: if thou canſt but cry out for the want of grace, yet comfort thy ſelfe, and do not conclude thou haſt no grace.

3 *Caution*

Do not conclude you have ſmall meaſures of grace, becauſe you have but ſmall meaſures of comfort; this is the fault of young converts, they take meaſure of their grace by their comfort, which is a falſe and deceitfull rule; growth of grace is not to bee meaſured by the working of joy: the ſweet bloſſome of joy may fall off, when the fruit of grace may come on; yea, ſometimes Chriſtians of the greateſt meaſure of grace, may have the leaſt meaſure of comfort; and all to let us know, that as the being and exerciſe, ſo the comforts of our graces come from free grace. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who was annointed above his fellowes, and was full of grace and truth, yet in the time of his deſertion was without comfort, when by reaſon of the ſuſpenſion of the favour of God his Father, he cried out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And ſo ſometimes Chriſtians that have but little meaſures of grace, may have much comfort; and this is the reaſon of that flaſh of joy that young converts have; it is Gods indulgence towards them to give them great joy at their firſt converſion: and indeed their joy at that time is the more

more taken notice of, becauſe uſually ſuch have much trouble of mind when they paſſe through the pangs of the new birth, the change is then ſpecificall, which afterwards is but graduall: and ſo though they have afterwards more grace, more ſetled joies and comforts, yet at their firſt converſion, they may have more ſenſe of their joies, though afterwards they may find an increaſe of grace, when joy may be as real, though not ſo ſenſible; and therefore doe not judge thy grace by thy comfort.

4 *Caution* · Do not conclude the meaſure of thy grace little, becauſe thou haſt but a little meaſure of gifts. Gifts are the iſſues of time and experience, and the fruits of ſtudies advantaged by the ſtrength of naturall parts. A man may have a quick and pregnant invention, a profound judgement, a retentive memory, a clear elocution, and the like, and yet none of theſe things can bee arguments of grace, but all are but naturall endowments. Gifts may be high, and grace may bee low: Thus it was with the Church of *Corinth*, they were *inriched with utterance and knowledge*, and they came behind other Churches in no gift: and yet the Apoſtle ſpeaks of theſe very *Corinthians*, that they were very low in grace: for ſo he taxeth them, 1 *Cor.* 3. 1. that *they were not ſpirituall, but carnall men, Babes in Chriſt*, that by reaſon of their *envying, ſtrife and diviſions, they were carnall, and walked as men*; Thus the Church of *Laodicea was rich, and*

1 Cor. 1. 5 & ver. 7.

1 Cor. 3. 1, 3

and increaſed in gifts, and grew proud of it too, and yet for grace *was poor, and naked, and blind and miſerable.* It is with ſome Profeſſors as it is with a well read Scholar, who having read many Books of Geography and the deſcription of places, can diſcourſe of them very well, but if hee were to travell thoſe Countries, of which he hath ſo often read, he would ſoon be at a loſs:—— So gifts may carry men far for matter of diſcourſe about Religion, but it is only grace that inables a man to practiſe Religion. A child of God that hath but a little meaſure of gifts, may have for all that much grace. Of all the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, it is ſaid of *Philadelphia*, that *ſhe had but a little ſtrength*; that is, but little ſtrength of parts and gifrs, and yet that Church was very eminent for grace; for ſhee with as much, if not more faithfulneſſe then the other Churches, *did keep the word of Chriſts patience, and did not deny his name.* Judge not therefore thy grace by thy gifts. It is good to *covet earneſtly the beſt gifts*, but the way of true grace (though but weak) is *a more excellent way.*

Rev 3.17.

Rev. 3.8.

1 Cor. 12. 31.

I ſhall conclude this point with ſome further conſolation to the people of God, that have but weak meaſures of grace.

1 *Comfort.*

Though thou art but weak in thy ſelfe, yet thou haſt much ſtrength from without thee, or rather it is in thee, becauſe of the Spirit of Chriſt that dwels in the hearts that doe believe: the devill doth all he can to make *a little*

Luke 22.32

little faith fail,—but Christ praies *that it faile not* Great are the confederacies of the world, the flesh and the devil against thy little grace, but *be of good comfort. Ye are of God little children* (saith St *John*) *and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world*: and the weaker thou art, the more advantage hath God *to magnifie the glory* of his power in thy weaknesse.

John 4.4.
2 Cor. 12.9.
Isa. 26.4.

Jude 24
1 Pet. 1 5.
Heb. 7.25.
εἰς τὸ παντελὲς i.e. *perfecte & perpetuò* εἰς τὸ παντελὲς. *Non tantùm perpetuitatem temporis significat* δηνεκὲς, *sed omnimodam perfectionem.* Camer. in Myr.

1. Comfort your selves ye weak Christians, for you have a strong God. *In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*——*Your God is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultlesse before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy He is able through his Almighty power through faith, to keep you unto salvation,*——you have a strong God, feare not, his power will be magnified in your weaknesse.

2. You have a strong Saviour, though your grace is weak, yet *hee is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.*——Christ is the a *Wisdome and the power of God to those that are called*; Yea, hee is called a strong Redeemer. *Our Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name*——Satan is indeed the Prince of the power of the aire: for so he is called, *Eph.* 2.2. but Jesus Christ is truly the great power of God, who is able, because *stronger then the strong man armed, to bruise Satan under the feet of his Saints.*

a 1 Cor. 1. 24
ἰσχυρότερος.
Rom. 6.10.

3. You lie under a strong Word, which is able to carry on the work of grace, which is begun

begun in you. The Word of God, though *it be foolishnesse to them that perish, yet it is the power of God to them that are saved*: yea it is an Engine, *mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts it selfe against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*; wherefore the Apostle praies, *Now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified*; so that chear up, though faith be weak, yet the word of God is strong; it is *that ingrafted word which is able to save your souls*: yea, in a word, *The word of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousnesse, that the man of God may be made perfect, and throughly furnished unto all good works.*

1 Cor. 1.18 Rom. 1. 16.

2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Acts 20. 32.

Jam. 1. 21.

2 Tim. 2. 16, 17. ἄρτιος καὶ ἐξηρτισμένος.

2 Tim. 2. 19 *Singula verba pondus habent, certitudo hæc nititur primò fundamento, secundò non quocunque, sed firmo, tertiò non hominis, sed Dei, quartò non vacillante, sed stante & obsigna to.* Dr Pride-aux. Zech. 12. 10 2 Tim. 1. 7.

4. You are weak, but you stand on a sure foundation. 1. It is a foundation. 2. A sure foundation. 3. It is a foundation of God: And 4. It is the foundation of God that cannot shake, but standeth firm. Now the weak beleever stands by the immutable decree of God, which here the Apostle cals the foundation of God.

5. Weak beleevers are assisted by a strong spirit. The spirit of God is not only a *spirit of grace and supplication*, but it is also a *spirit of power*. And therefore let weak beleevers chear up themselves, though they have but

little grace, yet that little grace is upheld and maintained by the great power of God unto salvation.

In te stat, & non stas. Aug.

The truth and essence of grace is not discern'd so much by good acts, as by good affections. ——— *How fair is my love, my sister,* saith Christ to the Spouse! God reckons of our beauty by our love, and of our perfection by the sincerity of our affections. Naturall abilities, to which formalists and hypocrites may come up, may and doe resemble good actions, but they cannot come up to good affections. A painter may paint the colour of the face, but his art cannot give heat unto the picture. Good actions may give you the resemblance of a Christian. So what *Jehu* did, resembled a true Reformer; but they are good affections that doe set out the life and heat of true grace. Judge thy grace therefore by thy affections, and take comfort in this, though thou art little and low in actions, if thou art warm and working in thy affections.

2 *Comfort*

Cant. 4. 10.

3. *and last comfort.*

The third and last comfort is this; That little grace shall be lasting grace. *Adam* had perfection, but had not perseverance; and thou (poor soule) hast imperfection of grace, but hast perseverance in grace. The most violent and impetuous flood of corruption shall not quench the least measure, the least spark of true grace; the most boisterous blast of temptation shall not extinguish this poor smoaking flax; not one drop of his divine ointment

ointment ſhall bee ſpilt as water upon the ground. Comets may blaze a while, and then they fall; to ſhew that it was a Comet, and not a Star,——True Stars do not, cannot fall. Oh then bleſſe God, who though in his anger, *he breaks the nations like a Potters veſſell with an iron mace*; yet ſuch is his tenderneſſe over weak beleevers, *he will not breake the bruiſed reed*: and though hee put out the candle of the wicked, yet *he will not quench the ſmoaking flax*. The ſeeming graces of hypocrites ſhall periſh and come to nothing, when true grace ſhall hold out.——The painted face decaies ſoon, but the naturall complexion laſts. A child of God may be toſſed by reaſon of corruption and temptation in a troubleſome ſea, but that ſhip ſhall never be ſhipwrackt, whereof Chriſt is the Pilot, the Scriptures the Compaſs, the Promiſes the Tacklings, Hope the Anchor, Faith the Cable, the Holy Ghoſt the winds, and holy affections the Sailes, which are filled thus with the gales of the Spirit, &c. *Fear not therefore little flock, for it is your fathers pleaſure to give you a kingdome.*

Stella cadens non eſt ſtella.

1 KING. 14.
part of the 13. verse.

Sermon V. At *Lawrence Jury, London, March* 23. 1651.

——*Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.*

HAving finished the former part of the doctrine about little measures of grace; I come now to the second part, which is this, *That God doth exactly take notice, tenderly cherish, and graciously reward the least beginnings, and the smallest measures of grace in the hearts of his people.*

Second part of the doctrine.

In the prosecution of which point, I shall proceed in this method.

1. I shall prove the truth of it.

2. I will also endeavour to give you the grounds hereof, and then make application. First, that God doth thus cherish the small beginnings of grace, will appear, if we consider, 1. These Scripture-instances, *Mat.* 12. 20. *He will not quench the smoaking flax*, that is, by the figure *Meiosis*, (as I have shewn already) he will kindle it. *He will not break the bruised reed*, that is, he will strengthen it.—— God regards not the flame only, but the smoaking of grace; not the ripe fruit, but the tender buds: Christ would have accepted of green figs of the fig-tree, though the time of ripe fruits

Mat. 12. 20.

Cant. 2. 13.

fruits was not yet come; ſo ſome expound that place, *Mar.* 11.13. Chriſt accepts not only the *hony*, but the *hony comb* too; that is, ſay Expoſitors, *not onely the excellent ſervices, but even the meaner ſervices of his people*; God takes notice of the cries of our heart, even the deſires of the humble, even the moſt inward groanings of the ſoule; not a good word but God takes notice of; nay, God takes not only notice of the leaſt good that is in his people, but he eies alſo the common good that is in ſuch as have no grace; thus when the young man came to Chriſt,—— though he had no true grace, yet it is ſaid, *Jeſus loved him.* And he took notice of that diſcreet anſwer of that Scribe mentioned by St *Marke*, and ſaid unto him, *Thou art not far from the Kingdome of heaven.*

Mar. 11.13.
Cant. 5.1. *Trap in loc.*
Exo. 14.15.
1 Pet. 3.6.
Mar. 10.21.
Mar. 12.34.

2. The truth of this point may be made out by thoſe ſweet and gracious promiſes God hath made to grace, though weak. I will give you one inſtead of many, mentioned by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *He ſhall feed his flocke like a Shepherd, hee ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his boſome, and gently lead thoſe that are with young.*

Iſa. 40.11.

3. By Counſels that Chriſt giveth to us, how we our ſelves ſhould carry our ſelves to thoſe that are weak, *viz.* to uſe them with all tenderneſſe. Now if God would have others, then ſurely himſelfe will deale with weak beleevers with much tenderneſſe.

Rom. 15.1.

1. God would have the ſtrong to bear with

Psal.103.6.

the *weak* to bear with *their infirmities*, and not to please *our selves*, and surely then God will bear with them, and forbeare them. See *Psal.* 103.

Rom.14.1.

2. We are to receive them into our fellowship——*Him that is weak in the faith receive you.* And surely God will not reject such out of Communion with himselfe and Son.

Rom.14. 15,21. 1 Cor.8 12. Gal.6.1. καταρτίζετε.

3. We must do nothing that will or may justly offend or grieve the weak. We must *not walk uncharitably*, and grieve *our brother with our meat.* We must not make him *stumble that is weak.*

4. We should *restore* a weak Brother that is fallen, and put him in joint againe. *with the spirit of meeknesse: you that are spirituall*, that is, strong Christians, *help up such as are fallen through weaknesse.*

Isa 35.3.

Heb. 13.12, 13.

5. We must *strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. and say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong.* We must *help to lift up hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather that it be healed.* We must not be like the Herd of Deer, who push away from them the poor wounded Deer, but wee must endeavour the *healing of the wounded*: and *comfort the feeble minded, and support the weak, be patient towards al men:* Support the weak, *i.e.* Set your shoulder to bear them up, who will stand, but are weak. ——Hold them up as a Crutch doth a body

1 Thes 5.14 Ἀντέχεσθε *sublevate infirmos alioqui ruituros* Beza.

that

that is lame: help him to ſtand, who is for weakneſſe like to fall. Let your charity help to hold them up, even as a beam holds up a houſe that is ready to fall. Now if God enjoines us to have all this care of thoſe that are weak in grace, to cheriſh, ſupport and comfort them, then ſurely the God of Mercy and Compaſſion, will bee very carefull to cheriſh the ſmalleſt meaſures of grace in the weakeſt beleevers.

ἀνθέχεθαι proprie ut tentem, & conantem, ſed non ſufficientem, nec ſat virium habentem. adjuvare C. A. Lap

Why doth God cheriſh the leaſt meaſures of grace in his people? 2. *Queſt.*

Becauſe the leaſt meaſure of grace is of a very great value; the leaſt grace and leaſt meaſure or degree of it, is the purchaſe of Chriſts blood, and the merit of his great ſufferings. The ſmalleſt ſpark of a Diamond is precious; pearles and precious ſtones are but little for quantity, but great for quality and eſteem. The leaſt degree of grace is the Work of God, and God will not forſake his own Work.—— *Anſw.* 1.

Little grace is of the ſame nature and excellency with the greateſt degree of grace: for as the very filings of gold are of the ſame nature with gold, ſo the leaſt meaſure of grace is grace.——The faith of all beleevers is the ſame faith ſpecifically, though not the ſame gradually, their *faith is in all alike precious*, but not alike ſtrong. 2. *Anſ.* 1 Pet. 1, 1.

Becauſe God is the Author of weak grace as well as of ſtrong——*Solomon* gives a good rule why the rich ſhould not ſlight the poor, 3. *Anſ.*

Prov. 32.2. poor, *becauſe God is the author and maker of them both.* And God will not ſlight the poor in ſpirit, no more then thoſe that are rich in grace *for he is the maker of them both.* It is an argument to us why wee ſhould not deſpiſe the poor, *becauſe God made him,* and therefore ſurely much, more becauſe the Lord made the poor and weak Chriſtian, *he will not deſpiſe, &c.*——

Iob 31.13. Verſe 15. *Job* ſaith, *He did not deſpiſe the cauſe of his man ſervant or maid ſervant,* and he gives a reaſon for it, *verſe* 15. *Did not hee that made me in the womb, make him: and did not he faſhion us in the womb?* which holds as a very firm argument why the rich ſhould not deſpiſe the poor, and ſo why the rich in grace ſhould not deſpiſe thoſe that are poor in grace; for God made and faſhioned them both Now what is a reaſon unto us, God is alſo pleaſed to make a reaſon unto himſelfe, *That hee will not forſake what hee hath formed*; for ſo the Prophet *Iſaiah, The Lord that created thee O Jacob, and he that formed thee O Iſrael, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; for thou art mine.* And again, *Thus ſaith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb: Fear not O Jacob my ſervant, and thou* Jeſurun *whom I have choſen*; yea, though hee be the *worm Jacob*, yet God that made him will not cruſh him, but cheriſh him. See a gracious promiſe made to thoſe that have but little grace, upon this very ground, that God is the Author of that

Iſa. 43.1.

Iſa. 44.1.

little

little grace. *Thy people alſo ſhall be all righteous, they ſhall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hand, that I may be glorified. A little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong Nation; I the Lord will haſten it in his time.* Iſa. 66. 21. 22.

The Lord will perfect his worke that concerneth his people, i.e. He will perfect and encourage the leaſt beginnings of grace, becauſe *Grace is his work in his ſervants.* It is a very good argument in prayer, *O Lord, forſake not the work of thy hands.* And though in reſpect of outward things God may deſtroy him *whom his hands have made and faſhioned*, yet it is otherwiſe in reſpect of grace, God wil not deſtroy any meaſure of grace which is the work of his hands. Property is the ground of love, care and tenderneſſe: as a man will look to a weak child, becauſe it is his child, and wil repaire a weak houſe, becauſe it is the houſe wherein he dwels. And that is the third demonſtration of Gods tender care over his people, that the meaneſt meaſure of grace ſhal not be deſerted or forſaken, becauſe God is the Author of it. Pſal. 138. 8. Iob 10. 8.

A fourth reaſon may bee drawn from the Covenant of grace, the nature and tenor whereof, is to accept of ſincerity in ſtead of perfection, deſires for deeds, purpoſes for performances, pence for pounds, and mites for millions; and therefore God will accept and reward the leaſt meaſure of grace, that is in truth and ſincerity. God requires of

Abraham

Gen. 17 1. and 25 1. תם יה *De victimis perfectis & immaculatis dicitur. Vide.*

Abraham, when he renewed with him the Covenant of grace; *Be thou perfect* (i.e upright) *and walk so before me, and I will be thy exceeding great reward.*

To make some Application of this truth. Wee may from hence deduce these inferences following: If God doth cherish and will reward the smallest measures of grace;

1 *Inference.* Then it will follow, *That God takes notice of the smallest sins to punish them.* He that graciously eies the very buddings of grace, will also justly eie the buddings of corruption in his own people: Thus hee was ready *to have slaine Moses for his neglecting of circumcising his sonne:* Exo. 4.24. And thus the Lord made a breach upon *Uzzah*, when he put forth his hand and staied the shaking of the Ark: 2 Sam. 6.7. *You only have I known* (saith God of his people) *of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* Amos 3.2.

It is true, it is said, *The Lord beholds not iniquity in Jacob, neither sees perverseness in Israel*:——but this is not, as the *Antinomians* glosse upon it, as if God did not see sin in his people, and is never displeased with their sins: But the meaning is, that God sees not sin in his people, so as eternally to punish it. Num. 23.21 ——And moreover, the most proper sense of that place, is this. That whereas *Balak* hired *Balaam* to curse the people of Israel, and that false Prophet for the wages of unrighteousnesse was ready enough to have taken all

all occaſions of curſing them, yet hee could not faſten any curſe upon them at that time; becauſe there was no provoking ſin amongſt them, and therefore hee gave *Balak* counſell to tempt them to ſin, and ſo by the ſtumbling block of the *Midianitiſh* women, hee drew *Iſrael* to idolatry and adultery, and ſo made them fall. But God doth ſee ſin in his own people, yea, the leaſt ſin, yea, he eies their failings, though not to damne them for them, yet to chaſtiſe them for them. God ſees the purpoſes of ſinne, as well as the purpoſes of grace. It is ſaid of *Balak*, that he aroſe and warred againſt *Iſrael*. Now we doe not read that ever *Balak* did actually wage warre againſt Iſrael, onely hee did intend and purpoſe it, and for that end *ſent and called Baluam the ſonne of Beor to curſe them*; and yet the holy Ghoſt reckons upon his wicked purpoſe as if he had accompliſht it.

Vid. Gataker in loc.

Ioſh. 24. 9.

Learn from hence; That the ſame mind ſhould be in Chriſtians of greater growth to the weak, as was in Chriſt Jeſus; who though he be higher then the higheſt, yet he looks upon the poore and lowly without diſdaine, and ſo ſhould we. *The heaven is the throne, & the earth is the footſtool of the Lord*, and yet this great God will not deſpiſe the weakeſt Saint, but *will look even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at his word.* He will look on the poor, weak, trembling ſoule, and ſhall we look off from ſuch with

2 Inference.

Iſa. 66. 1, 2.

with pride and disdaine, and set such at our footstoole? shall Christ give the Lamb in his Scutchion, and wilt thou give the Lion? shall he like a Lamb be meek and gentle, and thou like the Lion bee stout, haughty and stately, that contemns all the beasts of the Forrest? Oh bee not you supercilious and contemptuous towards weak Christians, who are injured and discouraged by strong Christians.

1. When they are put upon such austerities of Religion, as are farre beyond their strength and growth. When these poor, torn tottered and rent bottles are put upon to hold new wine, alas poor soules, they are discouraged; wherefore Christ proportions his doctrine to their capacities, and will not say that to them which they cannot at present heare; and so proportions out their duties to their abilities, and will not outmatch their strength with his commands. Fasting and suffering was a hard duty, and therefore he will excuse them till they have had more time, and more experience in the waies of God, till the Holy Ghost come downe upon them, and they have more grace; which is a good rule for us, not to discourage young beginners in the School of Christ, not to put them to read such Authors as are above their capacities.

Mat. 9. 16, 17.

2. When strong Christians are too sharp and rigorous in bitter reproofs, for the failings and infirmities of weaker Christians.

Young

Young converts like young twigs muſt bee gently handled, elſe you will breake them: you muſt excuſe their failings, hide their wants, commend their performances, cheriſh their forwardneſſe, reſolve their doubts, bear their burdens, and by thisgentleneſſe bring them into a love of Religion, that they may not diſtaſte it as ſoon as they know it.

3. By ſetting light by their gifts. Alas, how ſoon is the ſmoaking flax quenched, by the too much ſuperciliouſneſſe of thoſe that thinke themſelves bright torches? how eaſilie is the poor ſparke of grace trod out by the *foot of pride*?

4. By puzling them with doubtfull diſputes, contrary to that of the Apoſtle, *Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not unto doubtfull diſputations.* Rom. 14. 1.

5. By giving them ill example. Weak Chriſtians are more apt to be led by example then by Precept: When *Peter who was a Pillar in the Church, and a ſtrong Chriſtian, for feare of perſecution forſooke the Gentiles, and ſeparated and withdrew himſelfe, then others of the Jewes, (which in all likelihood were weake Chriſtians) diſſembled alſo.* Thus *Paul* argues to abſtaine from giving ill example, about the eating the *Idolothyta*; *If any man ſee thee which haſt knowledge*, i. e. *who art a ſtrong Chriſtian, ſit at meat in the Idols Temple, ſhall not the conſcience of him that is weak, be imboldened to eat thoſe things that are offer'd to idols?* Gal. 2, 12, 13

And therefore let Chriſtians learne from God,

God to cheriſh the weak beginnings of grace in the people of God. *Look not on me*, ſaith the Church, *becauſe I am blacke, becauſe the Sun hath looked upon me*, i. e. look not on me with a lofty and diſdainfull look, and with a coy countenance; and then the Church adds, *My mothers children were angry with me*, that is, other Congregations and people did diſeſteem and diſdain me for my infirmity. But this ſhould not be amongſt Chriſtians, but the ſtrong ſhould cheriſh the weak. Angels deſpiſe not the pooreſt Chriſtians, but do miniſter unto them.

Heb. 1. ult.

3 *Inference.*

Learn from hence, how God doth by leaſure and degrees, carry on in the hearts of his people the worke of grace unto further perfection. Muſhromes and ſuch like worthleſſe things, like *Jonas* his gourd, may ſpring up in one night; but things of moſt moment, are of longeſt growth before they come to perfection. The Elephant amongſt the Beaſts, and the Oak amongſt the Trees, and Man amongſt the rationall creatures, are longeſt before they grow up to their full and perfect dimenſions. And as it is in nature, ſo it is in grace, there is a progreſſe from leſſe to greater: all this work is by degrees. The godly are called *Trees of righteouſneſſe*, and yet this is by degrees. There is firſt the budding forth of the earth, and then thoſe things that are ſown, ſpring forth, &c. *v.* 11. And therefore let young converts learne from hence not to be diſcouraged. Gods works

Iſa. 61. 3.

Verſe 11.

works both of nature and grace are perfected by degrees.

1. Though God regards the leaſt meaſures of grace, let not this make you regardleſſe to grow in grace. In the firſt creation God ſaid to the creatures, *Increaſe and multiply*, and by vertue of that word, the earth brings forth to this day. Now it is ſo in the new and ſecond Creation; the Lord expects that our grace ſhould increaſe and multiply.

2 Uſe of Caution.

2. Though you have but a little grace, yet do not deſpiſe it, or diſparage it. —*Oh do not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things in the ſoule. Do not tread upon the bunch of grapes, upon the new wine in the cluſter, but ſay, there is a bleſſing in it.* Doe not deſpiſe a little graine of muſtard ſeed, it will grow to a tree; true grace is a ſpark of heaven, do not tread it out; deſpiſe not the leaſt, and bee not ſatisfied with the greateſt meaſure of grace.

2 Caution

Zech. 4. 6.

1. Let this comfort thy poor ſoule (Oh weak Chriſtian!) whoſe burden it is, that thou haſt much corruption, and but little grace. God will look over a great deale of ſinne, and will take notice of the leaſt grace. God will not in refining his gold and ſilver, loſe one dram of grace, though it lie among a heap of rubbiſh. Chriſt is ſaid, *to have his fan in his hand, hee will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner.* Now the uſe of a fan is to caſt out the worſt and keep in the beſt, to drive away the chaffe and ſave the wheat: ſo Chriſt, though he purge out

3 Uſe of Comfort.

Mat. 3. 12.

out the chaffe of corruption, yet he will ſave and preſerve every grain of grace. It is otherwiſe with the divels ſieve. Chriſt tels *Peter, that Satan deſired to ſift him.* Now the uſe of the ſieve is contrary to the fan, for that keeps the waſt and lets out the beſt. The divell doth all he can to deſtroy our grace, and to increaſe our ſin. But 'tis otherwiſe, God will kil thy corruptions, and cheriſh thy graces, and if the leaſt grace be in the ſoule, though with a mixture of much corruption, God will not deſpiſe it.

Luk. 22. 31.

2 *Comfort.*

God carries the moſt tender regard to thoſe that are weak in grace; the weak child is ſtill carried in our arms, and the weakeſt of the flock the good ſhepherd will carry in his boſome. Chriſt gave *Peter* charge in the firſt place *to feed his Lambs.*

Iſa. 40. 11.

Ioh. 21. 15.

1. Gods care over weak Chriſtians is ſuch that *he will not ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but with the temptation will make a way to eſcape, that they ſhall be able to bear it.* God doth conſider we are but duſt; and the wiſe Phyſician of our ſouls, will mercifully weigh every graine of every doſe, and will not outmatch their ſtrength whoſe ſtrength is ſmall.

2 God will not put them on difficult duties at the firſt Chriſt taught his diſciples ſuch doctrines as their weakneſſe could bear.

3. God will bear with their infirmities: he teacheth his children to go, and holds them up by the arms.

Hoſ 11. 13.

2. Tim.

2 Tim. 2. 1.

Be ſtrong in the grace of God that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

Sermon VI At *Lawrence Jury, London, March* 30. 1651.

HAving lately handled the Doctrine of the ſmall beginnings, and the leaſt meaſures of true grace, and ſhewn you how God will accept and reward them, by opening to you that paſſage in 1 *Kings* 14 13.——*Concerning Jeroboam's ſonne, in whom there was found ſome good.*——And leſt that doctrine ſhould accidentally (through the corruption of our deceitfull hearts) beget in us ſpirituall ſloth, and ſatisfaction in weak degrees of grace; therefore I ſhall proſecute my diſcourſe concerning the degrees of grace, and ſhew you, that though God regards weak grace, yet we muſt all labour to obey his apoſtolicall injunction, *to be ſtrong in the grace of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus.*

In the whole verſe you have three parts:

1. A loving Compellation, *My ſon.*
2. A preſſing exhortation, *Be ſtrong in grace* Acts 16. 2. Phil. 3. 5. 1 Tim. 1, 2.
3. The reaſon of it, in the illative, *Therefore.*

1. For the Compellation *Quære*, How *Timothy* could be *Pauls* ſon, for *his father was a Greek*, but *Paul was a Jew of the Tribe of Benjamin*? *Timothy* then was not *Pauls* ſon *in the fleſh, but in the faith.* Now

A further queſtion is, *Why is he called Pauls ſonne?*

Baldwin gives this reaſon, *Becauſe* (ſaies he) *Paul begat him to the faith*, alledging that in 1 *Cor.* 4. 17. compared with *ver.* 14. where *Paul* calls the *Corinthians*, whom he had converted to the faith, *his beloved ſons*, *ver.* 14. and ſo he cals *Timothy ver.* 17. But *Timothy* was not *Pauls* ſon in that ſenſe: for as *Eſtius* ſhewes, he was converted long before *Paul* knew him, by the godly inſtructions of his *Grandmother Lois*, and his *Mother Eunice*.

2 Cor. 4. 17 compared with ver. 14
2 Tim. 1. 5.
2 Tim. 3. 15

The true reaſons why *Paul* called *Timothy* his ſon, were,

1. Becauſe *Paul* was aged, and *Timothy* young, and it was uſuall for the old to call the younger ſonnes.

2. Becauſe he confirmed him in the faith.

3. Becauſe he loved him as a ſon, and *Timothy* loved *Paul* as a father.

Phil. 2. 22.

4. Becauſe as a ſonne with the father hee ſerved *Paul* in the Goſpel.

Before I come to the main doctrines, let me obſerve ſomething in the paſſage to it; upon theſe reaſons *Paul* cals *Timothy* his ſon. From the compellation, *My ſon*, Obſerve,

1. *Obſervation.*

1. That Miniſters ſhould uſe loving inſinuations towards their hearers, to uſher in uſefull inſtructions.

Soft words turn away wrath; and hard flints are broken upon ſoft pillowes. This was *Pauls* practice here and elſewhere; he gained their affections, the better to reform their judgements.

2. And

2. And then in that he cals him *My ſon*, in relation to himſelfe as a father, Obſerve,

That religion puts men into the neereſt union and the moſt indeared relations. They who are glued together in the blood of Chriſt, are knit together in the ſtrongeſt bonds. 2. *Obſer.*

Now from the reaſon of the duty, *Therefore my ſon, &c.* Expoſitors do vary, what this illative particle hath a reference to: Some make it to referre to *verſe* 7. of the foregoing Chapter, and ſo *Eſtius*, *God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a ſound mind*; and if ſo, *Sanguine Chriſti conglutinari.*

Then obſerve,——That the receiving the firſt degrees of grace, ſhould be a ſwaying reaſon to move us to grow in grace. 3. *Obſer.*

Others refer it to *Pauls* example, *v.* 8. or to the example of *Onesiphorus*, *v.* 16. from whence may be obſerved,

That the good example of good men, ſhould be an argument to us to increaſe in goodneſſe. 4. *Obſer.*

If it refer to the 15 verſe, *This thou knoweſt, that all they which are in Aſia be turned away from me, of whom are* Phygellus *and* Hermogenes; and thus *Theodoret* refers it: Then Obſerve,

That other mens Apoſtacy from the Profeſſion of grace, ſhould make the godly more carefull to grow ſtrong in grace. But I ſhall handle the Text without any relative conſideration. 5. *Obſer.*

Explication of the text.

Be ſtrong in the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus.] *Timothy* may be conſidered in a double capacity, either as a Miniſter, or as a private Chriſtian; *If as a Miniſter*, then the force of the exhortation lies in this: that he ſhould increaſe in Miniſteriall *gifts and graces*; whence may be obſerved.

Rom. 1.5.

Eph. 3.8.

6. Obſer. That Miniſters of all men ſhould grow in the truth, and in Miniſteriall gifts; becauſe as they grow, ſo will the people grow under their Miniſtry. Miniſters do receive grace and Apoſtleſhip for obedience to the faith among all Nations, *Rom.* 1.5.

And grace is given unto them, that they may preach unto others the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, Eph. 3.8.

7. Obſer. 2. If he be conſidered as a private Chriſtian, then hee is exhorted not to content himſelfe with grace received, but to *labour after more ſtrength of grace.*——

Be ſtrong in the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus] Grace may be ſaid to be in Chriſt two waies: either,

1. As the ſubject recipient of grace, or
2. As a fountain redundant and overflowing to his people.

Iohn 1.16. Grace is in Chriſt *in all fulneſſe*, from whence his people receive *grace for grace.*

There are two obſervations which I ſhall note from the words, conſidering the exhortation, without reference to what went before, or followes after.

Doct. 1. *That believers are not to reſt ſatisfied in weak meaſures*

meaſures of grace already received, but to endeavour to attain greater ſtrength of grace.

That Chriſt is the ſubject in which all grace is, and the fountaine from which beleevers muſt receive all their grace. Doct. 2.

In the opening of the firſt doctrine, the firſt thing is to make it appeare, *That beleevers muſt not reſt ſatisfied with weak meaſures of grace received, but muſt labor after more grace.* And this I ſhall prove,

1. By inſtances of two ſorts. 1. That beleevers have grown from weak grace to ſtrong grace, *who out of weakneſſe were made ſtrong.* Heb. 11 34. There are Expoſitors who refer this place to *Hezekiahs* recovery, 2 *Kin.* 20.——but it may have a more generall extent and application. The Pſalmiſt ſpeaking of Gods people (ſaies he) *They goe from ſtrength to ſtrength, every of them in Zion appears before God.* Pſal. 84. 7. It is true, the proper reference of theſe words is to the Jewes going up to *Ieruſalem* to worſhip, when the males went thrice a yeare up to *Ieruſalem* to worſhip, according to the Law, *Exod.* 23. 14 17. yet *Ainſworth* underſtands it of our growth in grace; ſo we are ſaid to be *changed from glory to glory*, that is, from little degrees of grace to greater; *grace* is but *glory begun*, and glory is but *grace perfected*; true grace is ſtill aſpiring unto perfection, and therefore ſaies *Paul, If by any meanes I might attain the reſurrection of the dead*: his meaning is, that I may attain that perfection of holineſſe, which accompanies the ſtate of the reſurrection 2 Cor. 3. 18. Phil. 3. 11.

ſurrection: a Metonymie of the ſubject for the adjunct, he is ſtill preſſing forward that he might attain further degrees of grace; and for that end *Paul*, he *forgat what was behind, and reached forth to thoſe things that were before*, ver. 13. And though *Paul* Eph. 3.4. had very great knowledge in the myſterie of Chriſt, yet hee ſtill deſired to know more and more of Chriſt.

2. By inſtances, wherein Gods people have

Eph. 3. 16. praied for the ſtrength of grace. *I bow my knees* (ſaies *Paul*) *unto the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he would grant unto you according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthned with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*

Rom. 15. 13, 14. And ſpeaking of the *Romans*, Rom. 15. 13, 14. hee ſaies, *I am perſwaded you are full of goodneſſe and knowledge*; yet becauſe the beſt and moſt learned *know but in part, and ſee but darkly through a glaſſe*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. he praies that God would *fill them with all joy and peace*

Phil. 1. 9. *in beleeving, that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.* So hee praies, *that their love might abound more and*

Col. 1. 9, 10. *more in knowledge and in all judgement; and that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdome and ſpirituall underſtanding, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, and be fruitfull in every good worke, increaſing in the knowledge of God.* Thus Gods people have praied for a further increaſe in grace. *Paul* after his converſion increaſed more in ſtrength, whereby he was enabled

to

to confound the oppoſing Jewes at *Damaſcus*, Acts 9.22.

2. By Commands. Leaving the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, we muſt *goe on to perfection*; we muſt *give diligence to add grace to grace*; ſo we are commanded *to bee ſtrong in the Lord, to ſtand faſt in the faith, to quit our ſelves like men, and be ſtrong, and to abound more and more*. Many ſuch commands are ſcattered up and down the Scripture, which ſhews our duty *to grow more and more*, and to attain unto greater meaſures of grace.

2. *Proof.* Heb.6.1. 2 Pet.1.5. Eph.6.10. 1 Cor.16. 13. 1 Theſ.4. 1 Cor.15. ult.

3. By promiſes, that Gods people ſhall doe ſo; *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*, that is, they ſhall increaſe more and more in ſtrength. Gods gentleneſs makes his people great, and inlargeth their ſteps under them. The feeble among them at that day ſhall be as *David, and the houſe of David ſhall be as God, as the Angell of the Lord before them*. Pareus in his ſhort notes which he cals his *Adverſaria*, ſaith, *He that is weak in faith, ſhall be as David, ſtrong in faith.*

Pro.4.18. Pſal.18.30, 36. 2 Sam.18.3. *Erit hic fortis fide & ſpiritu qualis David prædicatur.* Par. Adverſar.

Why ſhould beleevers not reſt ſatisfied with the firſt beginnings of grace, but labour to bee grown and ſtrong Chriſtians?

Queſt. 2.

The reaſons may be drawn, 1. Partly from the neceſſity of it, *Why you muſt do it.* And 2. From the danger, *If you do it not.*

Anſ.

1. From the neceſſity of it, there are theſe reaſons:

1. *Reaſons.*

1. If you conſider the ſtrong temptations

you are like to meet with all from the devill. We are therefore commanded to *be strong in the Lord; to put on the whole armour of God, that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and Powers, and against the Rulers of the darkness of this world.* Now shall the devill bee strong and armed, and shall we be content to be unarmed and weak Christians? it is worth your noting in the Epistle of *Iohn*; saies he, *I write unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.* But when he writes to children, he saies, *I write to you, because your sins are forgiven for his names sake*, intimating that though weak grace be sufficient to evidence to us the pardon of sinne, yet it is strong grace which is able to overcome the temptations of the devill. The devill shall not overcome the weakest measure of grace; but the stronger our grace is, the more able we are to rest and overcome that enemy of our salvation. The devil is called *a roaring lyon, whom we must resist stedfast in the faith*; it is not weak faith which is able to grapple with the devill, therefore ought we to be grown and strong Christians.

Eph. 6. 10, 11, 12.

1 John 2. 14.

Verse 12.

1 Pet. 5. 8, 9.

στερεοὶ.

2. *Reason.*

2. If we consider the strong oppositions we are like to meet with from the world; wee may be put unto it as *Paul, to fight with beasts*; such manner of unreasonable men wee may meet withall, and therefore we are commanded

1 Cor. 15. 32.

ded to *watch, and to ſtand faſt in the faith, to quit our ſelves like men and be ſtrong*; and the reaſon is given, *v.9.* There are many adverſaries we are like to meet with; and therefore we had need to pray with the *Pſalmiſt, to be ſtrengthened and ſaved by the right hand of the Lord.* Weak faith is not fit to be in a croud of oppoſition; and therefore we ſhould labour to *grow ſtrong in the grace of God.* Ch.16.13. Pſ.138.3.7.

3. Wee have many ſtrong corruptions in our hearts, which weak grace will never be able to mortifie; ſtrong paſſions, ſtrong luſts, and how ſhall weak grace bee able to grapple with, and have a conqueſt over theſe? If thy graces are weak when thy corruptions are ſtrong, thou wilt be miſerably foiled by thy corruptions; therefore pray for ſtrengthening and aſſiſting grace, whereby thou maieſt bee able not only to *reſiſt*, but to *ſubdue* and *mortifie* the ſtrongeſt luſts and paſſions in thy heart. 3. *Reaſon.*

Another ground of the doctrine is taken from the danger, *if you grow not ſtrong in grace.* As,

1. Others that made profeſſion of Religion after you, in time will goe before you in meaſures and degrees of grace: ſo it is ſaid, *That many that are firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt ſhall be firſt.* Thoſe who were firſt in the profeſſion of the Goſpell, ſhall be laſt in the degrees and meaſures of grace, becauſe they have not improved grace to a further increaſe of it. Mat.19.30. compared with Mat. 20.12,16.

2. If

2. If thou doſt not grow ſtrong in grace, thou wilt be ſure to decay, and to grow weaker: for not to go forward in grace, is to goe backward. Grace may be loſt in ſome degree, as to its exerciſe and comfort, though not to its being; and therefore ſaies the Apoſtle, *If theſe things be in you and abound, they make you that ye ſhall neither be barren, nor unfruitfull.* Intimating, that you will be barren if you doe not add grace to grace. Weake things, if they be not watched over, and ſtrengthened, will be ready to die.

Non progredi, eſt regredi.

2 Pet 1.8. Rev.3.2.

3. Though thou canſt not loſe the being of thy grace, yet thou wilt loſe the comfort of it, and thou maieſt be in as much trouble and perplexity as if thou hadſt no grace at all. It is true, weak grace will bring thy ſoul to heaven, but it is only ſtrong grace which will bring heaven into thy ſoule. Little grace is like a little mote, which is not ſeen becauſe it is little. Little grace is as it were no grace, as that man in the Goſpell, he cals his faith, unbeleefe; *Lord* (saies he) *help my unbeleefe.* Weakneſſe of grace makes mens perſwaſions of Gods love to bee preſumption, their zeale to be lukewarmneſſe, their grace to be but gifts, and (as here) their faith to bee but unbeleefe. It is ſtrong grace which gives gladneſs of heart, and hope in God; therefore ſaies *Jeremy, My ſtrength, and my hope is periſhed from the Lord.* When ſtrength in grace decaies, then hope and comfort decaies alſo. It is the Apoſtles prayer in the inſcription of

Mar.9.24.

Lam.3.18.

of many of his Epiſtles, *that grace and peace may bee multiplied*: If therefore you do not increaſe your graces, you will neither increaſe nor keep your comforts. *Hee that lacketh theſe things is blind* (ſaies the Apoſtle *Peter*) *and he cannot ſee afarre off*; it is not meant of a totall lack of grace (as hath been ſhewn) for as after is expreſſed, he is purged from his old ſins, though he forgets it, having loſt the ſenſe of pardon for want of adding grace to grace. 2 Pet. 1. 9.

4. Weak grace under great trials will expoſe a man to doubts and falls, as if hee had no grace at all: little grace will keep a man in ſmall trials, but not in greater. Little grace, as to the ſtrait a man may be in, may bee as good as no grace; and therefore when the Diſciples were at ſea, and *a great tempeſt aroſe, inſomuch that they were afraid*; that which in *Matthew* is ſaid to be *little*, in *Marke* is ſaid to be *no faith*. Intimating, that as to that particular exigency and ſtrait that they were in, their little faith did ſtand them in no more ſtead, then if they had had no faith at all. So *Peter*, Chriſt cals him ὀλιγόπιςον: Becauſe though he began to *walke upon the waves, ver.* 29 yet *When the wind grew boiſterous, hee was afraid, and began to ſink*. *Peter* did not ſink into the ſea, before his faith began to ſink in his ſoule. He that faints in the day of adverſity, it argues his ſtrength is ſmall, ſo ſaith *Solomon*. Mat. 8. 26. compared with Mar. 4. 40. Mat. 14. 31. Verſe 29. Pro. 24. 10.

I ſhould now proceed to a ſecond particular, and that is to give ſome Scripture notes of

of that man who is grown in grace;—but let me ſhut up this Sermon, with a ſharp and juſt reproof of many profeſſors in our time, who go from one Ordinance to another, and yet make little progreſſe or increaſe in Religion. They may be fitly compared to a company of Ants, who are very buſie about a mole-hil, and run to and fro, but never grow great: Even ſo we have many Chriſtians, they run from one Church to another, from one Preacher to another, and it may be from one opinion to another, but never grow up to the true grace, and in the true knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt.—— But I ſhall meet with ſuch people hereafter in this diſcourſe.——

2 TIM 2. 1.

Sermon VII. *At Lawrence Jury, London,* March 30 1651.

Be ſtrong in the grace of God that is in Chriſt Ieſus.

HAving in the former Chapter obſerved from this Apoſtolical injunction to *Timothy*, which is obligatory to all Chriſtians,

Doct. *That it is the duty of all beleevers not to reſt ſatisfied in weake meaſures of grace which they have received, but they are to endeavour to attain unto greater ſtrength of grace.*——

This point we have proved both by Scripture-inſtances, as alſo by ſeverall reaſons.

Now

Now I proceed to anſwer this queſtion, *viz.*

What are the notes the Scripture layes down, of ſtrong and grown Chriſtians?

Queſt.

Wee are to know there are marks in Scripture, both of the truth of grace, as alſo of the ſtrength of grace, and theſe muſt not be confounded, but diſtinctly conſidered. Our preſent queſtion is about markes of growth in grace.

1. Such as are growne in grace, do ordinarily enjoy a grounded aſſurance, and comfortable manifeſtation of the love of God in Chriſt to their ſoules. So St *John* ſaith, *Perfect love caſteth out feare*; The more perfect love is, the leſſe of tormenting feare is in the ſoule, and the reaſon of our feare and doubting is for want of love. Wee cannot comprehend the great love of God in Chriſt to our ſoules, till *we are ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; which you will ſee in the Apoſtles prayer for the *Epheſians, that God would grant unto them according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened with might by his ſpirit: that Chriſt might dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they might be rooted and grounded in love: and that they might bee able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Chriſt, &c.* So that the more ſtrength of grace is in the ſoul, the clearer is our comprehenſion of Chriſts love to the ſoul.

Anſ 1. 1 Ioh. 4.18. *Non ità pellitur timor quin animos noſtros ſolicitet, ſed ità pellitur ut non turbet, neque impediat pacem noſtram.* Calvin. Eph. 3.16. 17,18.

3. Strong and grown Chriſtians are able expe-

Anſ. 2.

2 Cor. 1. 4. experimentally to *comfort others with the ſame comfort wherewith they themſelves are comforted of God*, and when they are *converted, they are able to ſtrengthen their brethren*, as Chriſt ſpeaks to *Peter*. By *Converſion* in that place, is not meant the firſt work of grace wrought in the ſoul; for that was wrought in *Peter* before his fall; but the meaning is, *Peter*, when thou art *ſtrengthned* & *recovered* from thy fal, when thou haſt recovered ſtrength again, then ſee that thou be careful to ſtrengthen others, who perhaps may fall into the ſame *weakneſſe* with thy ſelfe. ——— *If any man be overtaken with a fault*, (ſaith *Paul* to the *Galatians*) *you that are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch a man in the ſpirit of meekneſs*. You that are *ſpirituall*, i. e. you that are grown and experienced Chriſtians, ſee that you doe endeavour to recover ſuch a fallen brother. *Paul* prayes for the *Philippians, that their love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and judgement*; that is, that they might have knowledge with judgement and experience, ſo as they might uſe their judicious knowledge in love for the edification of others that were but weake in grace: and in the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, the ſame Apoſtle laies down this character of of a ſtrong Chriſtian, ——— *I am perſwaded of you my brethren, that you are full of goodneſſe, filled with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another*: from whence we may gather the Character mentioned, that the more perfect any Chriſtian is in knowledge, or any other grace,

Luke 22. 23 expounded.

Gal. 6. 1. expounded

Phil. 1. 9. expounded

Rom. 15. 14

grace, the more able he is to *admoniſh* others for their edification,

Grown Chriſtians are ſuch as underſtand the great and profound myſteries of Religion; they are not only ſuch as uſe *milke*, and underſtand only the firſt and plaine Principles, ſuch as the Apoſtle cals *Babes and unskilfull in the word of righteouſneſſe*:——but they are ſuch as are able to digeſt ſtrong meat, *i.e.* the deep myſteries of the Goſpell; they doe in ſome meaſure underſtand, and have their *ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evill*, that is, to judge between true doctrines and falſe. Strong and grown Chriſtians have ſuch an *eare*, *as is able to try words*, (as it is in *Job*) *even as the mouth trieth meats*. ——It is an obſervation of the learned *Mercer*, that the ſame word in Hebrew which ſignifies an *Eare*, in the duall number ſignifies a *paire of ballances*——to note thus much, that an experienced and judicious Chriſtian will weigh whatſoever he heareth, before he believeth it. For as the tongue of the ballance ſtandeth as a judge between the two ſcales, ſo ſhould the heart of every man weigh what he heares, and ſo will every grown and judicious Chriſtian. He will not take up truth upon truſt, but he conſidereth firſt, and believeth afterwards.——Nor will a grown Chriſtian take up with inferiour knowledge, but will like a grown Scholar, be ſearching after the deep things of God.

Anſ. 3.

Heb. 5. 13.

verſe 14.

Iob 34. 3.

Iob 12. 11. אזן ומלין יבחן *Aurium & ſtateræ idem eſt nomen in Hebræo, duæ enim aures ſunt quaſi bilances quibus expenduntur quæ audimus* Mercer ὦς & γῦς, *ut os cibum, ſic mens verbum.* Chryſoſt.

A grown, experienced and ſtrong Chriſtian,

Anſ. 4.

ſtian is moſt converſant and imploied in the moſt ſtrict and ſevere exerciſes of Religion, which tend moſt to mortification: weak Chriſtians are all for eaſie and ordinary exerciſes, as hearing and reading good books; but a ſtrong Chriſtian is much in ſpirituall watchfulneſſe, ſecret prayer, frequent faſting, ſelfedenyall, and heavenly meditation, and ſuch like duties as have a ſpeciall influence upon the mortification of ſinne and corruption. A child whole parts and ſtrength is weak, is not converſant about ſuch arduous and great undertakings as a grown man.

Luk. 5. 33, 34, 35, &c.

Anſ. 5. He can believe the accompliſhment of Promiſes and Scripture Prophelies, though Gods Providence ſeem to make againſt them, and though there ſeem no outward probabilities for them. Thus it argued *Abraham* was ſtrong in faith, who *againſt hope beleeved in hope; and being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead.*—— There were ſeveral things might have ſtaggered *Abrahams* faith, had it not been very ſtrong.

Rom. 4. 18. 19, 20. expounded

Compare Gen. 15. 4. with Gen. 16. 16. & with Gen. 21. 5.

1. There were fifteen yeares at leaſt between the making of the promiſe of giving him a ſon, and the fulfilling of it.

2. *Abraham* was above an hundred yeares old before he had a ſonne, and ſo unlikely to have children.

3. *Sarahs* womb dead, and no ordinary hope of Procreation.

4. And after the promiſed ſon was born, God cals upon *Abraham* to offer him up, and

and yet notwithſtanding all this, *he ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbeleefe, but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God, and was fully perſwaded, that what he had promiſed he was able alſo to perform.* Ro.4.20.21

A ſtrong beleever can ſuffer as well as do for the ſake of Chriſt. Greater ſtrength of grace is required to ſuffer for the truth, then to profeſs the truth; and therefore our Saviour propounds this to the ambitious ſuitors, the ſons of *Zebedee*; *Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I ſhall drink of? and to be baptized with the baptiſm wherewith I am baptized with all?* implying thus much, that they did not well underſtand their own ſtrength, that there was more grace required to ſuffer for the name of Chriſt, then to beleeve on the name of Chriſt; and accordingly as is our ſtrength of grace, ſo is our courage for the cauſe of Chriſt, leſs or more. *Nicodemus* when he had but little grace, he came to Jeſus, *but yet in the night*, by ſtealth; he durſt not openly appeare for Chriſt; but afterwards as he grew in grace and knowledge of Chriſt, ſo hee grew in courage for Chriſt. And when the cauſe of Chriſt was debated in the aſsembly of the chiefe Prieſts and Phariſees, there *Nicodemus* boldly pleads the cauſe of Chriſt.— *Doth our Law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doth?* Nay, we read afterward of a higher reſolution of this once fearfull *Nicodemus*, when Chriſt was crucified, and at the loweſt—— *Anſ.6.* Mat.20. 22,23. Iohn 3.2. Ioh.7.50.

We finde that *Nicodemus which* (ſaith the text) *came at firſt to Jeſus by night, brought a hundred pound weight of mixture of Myrrh and Aloes for the burriall of Chriſt.* The like inſtance we have in *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, who was a Diſciple of Chriſt, but ſecretly for feare of the Jewes.——But afterwards, when he had got more ſtrength of grace, the Scripture tels us, *He went in to Pilate boldly, and craved the body of Jeſus.* To profeſſe Chriſt boldly, in a time when dangers and difficulties attend that profeſſion, argues a ſtrong faith; a weakly conſtitution dares not goe out, unleſſe the weather be faire; but a ſtrong body can endure the hardeſt weather. A weak and young Convert is fitter to live in the proſperity of the Goſpell; but an old experienced Chriſtian like an old tried ſouldier, will not ſhrink in the hardeſt trials.—*If thou faint in the day of adverſity*, it is becauſe *thy ſtrength is ſmall.*

Ioh. 19. 39.

Verſe 38.

Mar. 15.43

Prov. 24. 10

Anſ. 7. He is one who is able to govern his tongue, that though paſſion be in the heart, yet through the ſtrength of his grace he bridles it in, and reſtrains it, ſo as it ſhall not break into open railings, revilings and clamours as others doe. S. *James* gives this character of a ſtrong Chriſtian; *If any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man*; not legally but Evangelically; He is a perfect man, *i.e.* He is grown ſtrong in the grace of God.

Iam. 3 2.

Anſ. 8. He is one that dares truſt Gods providence for outward things, however he is in ſtraits; as it

it argues littleneſſe of faith, to diſtruſt Chriſt for food and raiment: ſo it argues ſtrength of faith, that though the viſion tarry, and no deliverance appear, yet then to live by faith, as the juſt are ſaid to do, this argues ſtrength of faith. Mat. 6. 25. 30. Hab. 2. 4.

Hee is one that labours for unity in the Church, as well as for purity in the Church. He will labour (to his power) that Chriſts coat ſhall be without rent, as well as without ſpot. This character I gather from that exhortation of the Apoſtle, *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained let us walke by the ſame rule.* It is a note thou art weak, when thou makeſt a ſtirre in the Church about thy opinions; weak children are moſt froward; when children are weak and ſickly, nothing will pleaſe them. ſo it is with ſome weak ones in the Church. their humour is ſuch, you know not how to pleaſe them; but a grown experienced Chriſtian is ſober and wiſe, and very earneſt to preſerve unity in the Church of Chriſt. *Anſ.* 9. Phil. 3. 15.

Before I proceed to ſpeak any more about ſtrength of grace; I ſhall make ſome application of what I have delivered about the markes and ſignes of ſtrong grace, and the uſe I ſhall make, ſhal be to give you ſome cautions about theſe foregoing characters, and there is need of a twofold Caution. *Uſe* 1.

1. Take heed you doe not imagine your ſelves ſtrong in grace, when you are weak; this is a dangerous miſtake.

2. Take heed of thinking and judging your ſelves weak in grace, when you are ſtrong in grace; this is an uncomfortable miſtake.

Prov. 13. 7. *There is a man* (ſaith *Solomon*) *that maketh himſelfe rich and hath nothing; and there is a man that maketh himſelfe poor, and yet hath great riches.* I would therefore caution you that you may neither live above nor beneath what you have, that you may not proudly fancy you have what you have not; nor diſcouragedly fear you want what you indeed have.

1. *Uſe of Caution.*

2. You are not to meaſure the ſtrength of grace by the length of your Profeſſion. Many who are long *ſtanders* in the Profeſſion of Religion, are but ſlow walkers in the waies and practice of Religion; the ſouls Proficiency in grace, is not the iſſue of length of time, but the fruit of free grace. There were thoſe in the Church for ſo long a time, that they *ought to have been teachers of others*, but

Heb. 5. 12. they had attained but little growth or ſtrength of grace. They that came at the eleventh hour had their penny, as well as thoſe that came early into the Vineyard. The

Mat. 20. 1. &c. paralleld ſcope of which parable (is as ſome interpreters ſay) to ſhew that thoſe who came late to the Profeſſion of Religion, may yet outgo many in gifts and graces, who have been long before them in Profeſſion. How many amongſt

amongſt us, their years ſpeak them eighty, but but their knowledge and grace not eighteen?

2. Meaſure not the ſtrength of grace by the ſtrength of your affections to ſome of the waies of God. The love of a newly married Couple may be more fond at firſt, afterwards it's more ſolid. Women who are the weaker veſſels, are uſually more affectionate. Weak Chriſtians are uſually moſt affectionate. When the Cripple was cured, we read that upon his firſt cure he leaped for joy; it's likely he did not continue to doe ſo: the newneſſe of the change did much affect him, and ſo it doth young converts. Acts 14 10.

3. *Meaſure not the ſtrength of grace, by the abundance of the means of grace which you enjoy.* Alas, *Laodicea* had a glorious light ſhining amidſt her: ſhe was one of the *ſeven Candleſticks.* And becauſe ſhe had much means of grace, ſhe miſtook her ſelfe, ſaying, *I am rich and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing.* But ſaid Chriſt, *Thou knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Rev. 3. 17.

4. *Meaſure not the ſtrength of grace by the ſtrength of your gifts.* There is a new diſeaſe amongſt children, called the *Rickets*, when children grow big in the head, but weak in their limbs: this diſeaſe is ſpiritually upon the ſoules of many of our Profeſſors; their heads grow in reſpect of gifts and knowledge, but they doe not grow ſtrong to walke in the waies of God; they are like the *Moon*, in-

creasing in light, but not in heat. In the daies of the *Schoolmen* the gifts of men were very high and yet the power of goodnesse was at a low ebb in those daies; there were in those times many *sublime notions, Seraphicall speculations, curious distinctions, subtill objections,* and *elaborate answers* to them, *grave and weighty sentences*; but alas, but a little of the power of grace in the hearts of those men and them they taught.

2 *Caution*

2. *Caution* is, to prevent mistakes of those who are apt to judge themselves weak in grace, when indeed they are strong in grace.

1. Because thou hast not perfection of grace, doe not therefore conclude thou hast not strength of grace. Truth of grace is one thing, and strength of grace is another; so strength of grace is one thing, and perfection of grace is another. You must stay for perfection till you come to heaven; it is *there* only, *where the spirits of just men are made perfect.* Heb. 12. 23. It is a witty observation that one hath; *In Grammer* (saith he) *the Present tense is accompanied with the Preter-imperfect tense, but the Future with the Preter-pluperfect tense.* Even such is our present state of grace, it's accompanied with imperfections,—but our future shall be more then perfect; *There is no perfection here. There is not a just man on earth that doth good and sinneth not,* (saith *Solomon*) *Who can say, I have made my heart clean? If I wash my hands with snow water,* (saith *Iob*) *and make my selfe never so clean; yet shalt thou* Eccl. 7. 20. Prov. 20. 9

plunge

plunge me in the ditch, and my own cloths ſhall abhor me. i. e. Though I have by regeneration ſome grace, yet all my defilements ſhall never in this life be put away. In the Propheſie of *Zechariah* wee have the Lord ſpeaking thus: *I will refine them as ſilver, and will try them as gold is tried*; and yet in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, God ſaith, *I have refined thee, but not with ſilver*; to reconcile both places, The meaning is, that though God begin to refine his people, yet they are not perfectly refined. Zech. 13. 9 Iſa. 48. 10.

2. Do not judge thy ſelfe weak in grace, becauſe thou haſt not ſtrong affections. God doth make up in the experience of old and grown Chriſtians, what is wanting of the great affections they had at their firſt converſion. Holy *Greenham* often praied that he might keep up his young zeal with his old diſcretion. What is wanting in affections, God makes up to thee in ſolidity of judgement, clearneſſe of knowledge, abundance of experience; and ſtableneſſe in the faith. *Mr Greenham.*

3. Judge not the ſtrength of thy grace by the ſtrength of thy comforts, the fruit may grow ſtrong, when the bloſſome is off. I have ſpoken to this before, and therefore will adde this, that heavenly joies and raptures are very ſparingly found among Gods people. They are Gods ſpeciall indulgences to ſome of his ſpeciall children. I will conclude with a ſaying of that godly and learned Scotchman, *Whilſt I live* (ſaith hee) *I never expect to ſee perfect Reformation in the* *Mr Rollock.*

Church, or feel perfect raviſhing joies in my heart.

2 Tim 2. 1.

Be ſtrong in the grace of God that is in Chriſt Ieſus.

Sermon VIII. At *Lawrence Jury London*, April 6. 1651.

I Proceed now to anſwer ſome caſes of conſcience, which may be deduced from the Doctrine I have laid down.

Caſe 1. 1. *Whether ſtrong temptations may be conſiſtent with ſtrong grace?* This is a needfull and practical Caſe, becauſe the People of God, when tempted by the devill, they do not only queſtion the ſtrength, but the truth of their grace.

Before I reſolve this Caſe, I ſhall premiſe theſe generall poſitions.

Poſit. 1. 1. It is certaine, where there is truth of grace, there may be ſtrong temptations from the devill. The devill is like a theefe, which robs not out-houſes, where there is nothing but dung and ſtraw; but the Cabinets that are in the Cloſet: ſo this great thiefe of the world, bee is not ſo eager to rob and ſpoile the out-houſes, wicked and ungodly men; but thoſe who have the riches of grace in the cabinets of their hearts, theſe he labours to rob and ſpoile: or as a pirate, who ſets not upon an empty veſſell, but upon a ſhip laden with rich merchandize; thoſe who are fraught

fraught with the rich gifts of grace, the devill by his temptations, will labour to make prize of for himselfe.

2. Let the temptations of the devil be never so strong, yet they shall not be above the strength of grace, which beleevers have received from God. *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* He wil proportion the burden to the back, and the stroak to the strength of him who is to beare it; if temptations increase, our strength shall also increase, whereby we may be able to grapple with them. *Posit.* 2. 1 Cor. 10. 13

3. It is evident, that the temptations of the devill are alwaies ordinarily most strong, after Gods people have discharged some extraordinary duties to God, or have received most discoveries of grace from God. In both these cases the devils temptations are usually great. You finde that immediatly after the Celebration of the Lords Supper *the devill desired to winnow the Disciples*; after they had performed that extraordinary service to God, the Devill was desirous presently to set upon them. So you finde that after Christ had in an extraordiuary manner, *fasted forty daies and forty nights*, hee was immediately after tempted of the devill; and so also after his baptism, *no sooner was he out of the water of baptism, but he was in the fire of temptation.* The *Israel* of God can bee no sooner out of *Egypt*, but his bellish *Pharaoh* pursues them. And *Hezekiah* had no sooner kept the solemn *Posit.* 3. Luk. 22 31. Mat. 4. 2, 3. Dr *Halls* observations.

lemn Passeover, but *Senacherib* comes up against him. All this is to shew us, that after we have put forth most grace in a duty, then the devil will labour to play his aftergame with us, if he misse of his foregame; if Satan cannot keep us from duty, and from inlargement in duty, he will flie-blow our duties by pride, and so marre them. And then after we have received the most special manifestations from Gods love and favour in Christ, then may we expect to be assaulted by the devill: Thus *Paul*, after he had *those heavenly*
2 Cor. 12. 7. *raptures, and abundance of Revelations*, the devill set upon him with vile temptations; he had *the messenger of Satan to buffet him, a thorn in the flesh*; which is not to be meant of any disease, but of some sharp temptation from the devill. So you find that immediately after that voice to Christ. *This is my wel beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*,
Mat. 3. 17. that then the Tempter came to him. Hence you may gather from that connexion between those two Petitions in the Lords Prayer, *Forgive us our trespasses, and lead us not into temptation:* to note to us, that no sooner can we get the evidence of our pardon, but we may expect to be tempted of the devil.

Posit. 4. 4. That men who have the greatest strength of grace, are like to meet with the fiercest assaults, and the strongest temptations from the devill; and this brings me to answer the Case, *That strength of grace may be consistent with strong temptations.* To clear and confirm this

this, there are theſe two particulars to be enquired into.

1. When temptations may be ſaid to bee ſtrong?

2. How and why ſuch ſtrong temptations may be conſiſtent with ſtrong grace?

1. *When temptations may be ſaid to be ſtrong?* *Queſt.* 1.

1. Then may temptations be ſaid to be ſtrong, when the ſolicitations of the devil to ſinne are urgent with the ſoule, when they are not weak and faint digeſtions, but violent aſſaults, which will not be removed untill aſſented to; when the devil haunts a man ſo that he will not let him alone, then may they be ſaid to be ſtrong. Thus it is ſaid, *Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael,*——*i.e.* He ſet himſelfe to tempt *David.* *And provoked him i.e.* He would not let him alone, but haunted him with helliſh importunity,——*till he numbred the people.* 1 Chr. 21. 1

2. When they are frequent and continued. Small temptations often ſuggeſted, become ſtrong. Small drops of water by frequent falling, make hollow the hard ſtone; which a few great and forcible blowes will not do: ſo temptations, though but to ſmall ſins, if they be continued, may have greater entrance into the heart, then the violent aſſault may.

3. When they are ſuited by the devill to a mans diſpoſition or preſent condition; ſo was that temptation by which the devill ſet upon Chriſt after he had faſted forty daies and forty nights: *Command,* ſaies he, *that theſe ſtones*

Mat.4.3.

ſtone may be bread. It was ſuted to his preſent condition, meat for his hunger. If you offer meat to a naked man, he values it not, or clothes to a hungry man, becauſe it is not ſuted to his preſent exigence: but if the gift you offer be ſuted to the mans neceſſity, clothes to him that is naked, and meat to him that is hungry, then it becomes acceptable. The devill doth not caſt temptations at random, he is more ſubtill then to row againſt winde and tide, hee knowes which way the ſtream of our affections and diſpoſitions runs, and he ſuits his baits accordingly. *Every man* (ſaies the Apoſtle) *is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own luſt and enticed.* It is a metaphor taken from Fiſhermen, who have this skil, that according to the nature of the fiſh, ſo they will ſuit their bait, whereby they lie in wait to deceive either the ſight or the take of the poor fiſh. The Devill is the great fiſher of ſouls, and makes uſe of ſuch temptations which are moſt likely to take; he obſerves to what ſins a mans Relations, Calling or opportunities lay him moſt open and obnoxious, and accordingly hee laies his ſnare, and ſpreds his net. Though its true, that every man hath a principle within him ſuting to every ſinne: yet it is as true that every man is not equally active for, or diſpoſed unto every ſin. The devill ſees what ſin is moſt predominant in man, and ſo he frameth a temptation ſutable; He ſets a wedge of Gold before a covetous *Achan*; *Cozby* an harlot

Iam.1.14.

δελεαζόμενος— *Metaphora à Piſcatoribus, qui inescant, & homo captant*, Beza.

harlot, before an adulterous *Zimri*: a faire preferment before an ambitious *Abſalom*: hee knowes well, that a fit object preſented, is a victory halfe obtained. In theſe three caſes, temptations may be ſaid to be ſtrong.

Queſt. 2. *How doth it appeare that temptations ſo urgent, ſo continued, and ſo ſuted, may be conſiſtent with ſtrong grace?*

Anſ. 2. By inſtances, whereby it appeares the beſt of Gods children have been moſt tempted. *Job* a holy man, yet with what ſtrong temptations was he aſſaulted? the devill impoveriſhed him in his ſtate, and ſo would tempt him to diſtruſt Gods providence; took away the lives of his children, to make him queſtion providence; tormenting him with grievous diſeaſes, to make him clamour againſt providence; and above all this, tempted him *to curſe God and dye*, by the inſtigations of his wife; and yet though *Job* was thus haunted by the devill, he was a beleever ſtrong in grace, and the moſt eminent Saint in that age, and that part of the world at that time, as God himſelfe teſtifies of him, *that there was none like him upon earth, a perfect and an upright man.*——He was not only for riches the greateſt of all the men of the Eaſt, but for holineſſe the greateſt upon the earth; yet thus was he afflicted and aſſaulted by the devill. Iob. 2. 8.

Another inſtance there is of *David*, an eminent beleever, and hath this commendation, *that he was a man after Gods own heart*, and

and yet how furiouſly was hee tempted by the Devill? one while Satan moved him to number the people, another time to defile another mans wife, another time to counterfeit himſelfe mad before *Achiſh* King of *Gath*, another time to judge all his holy duties to be in vain, and at another time to queſtion the faithfulneſſe of God in his promiſe to make him King *Hee ſaid in his haſte that all men were lyars*, even *Samuel* the Prophet alſo. Thus *Peter*, an eminent Apoſtle of Chriſt, after he had made ſuch a glorious confeſſion of his faith, and had diſcovered more grace then in all his life time before, you finde him ſuddenly after by an inſtigation from the Devill, begin to rebuke Chriſt, and counſelling him to ſpare himſelfe. And thus *Paul*, that had ſuch high and heavenly raptures, ſuch divine extaſies, yet had he the meſſenger of Satan to buffet him. But above all inſtances, you have *Ieſus Chriſt*, who though he had perfect grace, and was full of grace and truth; yet this could not exempt him from the temptations of the Devill. Hee was full of the holy Ghoſt, yet was he forty *daies tempted of the devill*, and that with ſtrong temptations; if you conſider their continuance, their urgency one after another, and ſutability to that his preſent condition. So that it is plainly manifeſt, that ſtrong temptations may bee conſiſtent with ſtrength of grace by theſe inſtances given.

Mat. 16. 16. 17 compared with ch. 16. 22. 24.

2. It appears alſo by Reaſons, drawn

1. From

1. From God, for the clearer illuſtration of the glory of his own attributes: and therefore the Scripture is clear in this, particularly to ſhew how the temptations of Gods people make his attributes to be more illuſtrious. As firſt, his faithfulneſſe: *God who is faithfull, will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* And then his wiſdome: *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.* He will by his wiſdome finde a way for their eſcape. And then alſo hereby will his pity and compaſſion bee made glorious: therefore *Chriſt became like unto us, that he might be a mercifull high Prieſt, able to ſuccour and pity thoſe that are tempted.* And then laſtly, the glory of his power. In our weakneſſe God will manifeſt his power, *for his ſtrength is made manifeſt in weakneſſe.* Thus it pleaſes God to exercise his people with great afflictions and temptations, for the ſetting out of his own glorious Attributes, and magnifying of his own name.

Reaſon 1.

1 Cor. 10.

2 Pet. 2. 9.

Heb. 2, 27.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

2. Another reaſon may bee drawne from Gods people themſelves.

Reaſon 2.

1. God in afflicting his children aimes at their good. Thus when the Devill tempted *David* to number the people, and when hee was ſacrificing at the floor of *Ornan* the Jebuſite, there did God tel him that the Temple ſhould be built; this was the iſſue of his temptation. So when *Job* was ſo tempted and afflicted, the iſſue of all was for his good. *Iobs* graces had never been ſo *illuſtrious*, had not the

2 Chr. 21. 1.
1 Chr. 3. 1.

the devils temptations been ſo *furious*. This is one end of Gods afflicting his people, that their graces may become more orient.

2. Another may be to check pride. There is no greater temptation in the world to pride, then eminency in grace. Pride, it is that worſt fruit, which growes upon the beſt ſtock. 'Tis not ſo much the ornaments of the body, as the endowments of the mind, which
2 Cor. 12. 9. ſtirs up pride; and this was *Pauls* caſe, after his abundance of Revelations, there was a thorn in his fleſh, a meſſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him, leſt he ſhould be lifted up. God will ſuffer thoſe that have ſtrong grace, to be ſtrongly tempted, to check the pride of their hearts.

Reaſon 3. 3. The godly are more able to grapple with ſtrong temptations then weaker Chriſtians are, and ſo God ſutes the ſervice and ſufferings of his people, to the proportion of the ſtrength of grace.

3. Another reaſon may bee taken from the devill, from that malice which he bears to all the people of God, and eſpecially to thoſe who have moſt grace; whom God loves moſt, the devill hates moſt. When the voice from Heaven ſaid to Chriſt, *Thou art my wel-beloved Son*, then came the devill to aſsault and to tempt him. If you are the objects of Gods deareſt love, you will be the objects of the devils deepeſt rage: and though he cannot damn thy ſoule, yet he will trouble thy conſcience; if he cannot break thy head, he will bruiſe thy heel. 2. It

3. It alſo proceeds from the devils knowledge, as well as his malice; he knows if he can but get thoſe which are ſtrong in grace to ſin, he ſhall do thee more miſchiefe: As

1. It will open the mouth of wicked men to blaſpheme God and Religion, as in the caſe of *David*, *by this deed thou haſt given great occaſion to the enemys of the Lord to blaſpheme.* How were the mouths of Gods enemies opened to blaſpheme his name? 2 Sam. 12, 14.

2. It will imbolden the weak to ſinne with more freedome, when they ſhall ſee thoſe which are eminent to fall: and thus the example of *Peter* made the Gentiles to Judaize. When the ſtrong ſhall abuſe his liberty, hee becomes a ſtumbling block to thoſe which are weak. When *Phigellus* and *Hermogenes* turned away from the faith, how did all *Aſia* turn aſide alſo? Men of eminent gifts, when they ſhall apoſtatize, how do they draw others in abundance? Gal. 2. 14. 1 Cor. 8. 9. 2 Tim. 1. 15

3. It will provoke God to inflict heavy judgements on the places where you dwell. Thus the Devill knew that if he could get *David* to number the people, it would procure a judgement upon them; and therefore it is not ſaid, he ſtood up againſt *David*, but *againſt Iſrael, and provoked him to number the people*: he wel knew, if he could prevaile with *David* all *Iſrael* ſhould ſuffer for it. Thus we ſee, that where there is ſtrength of grace, there may be and are ſtrong temptations. 2 Chron. 21, 1

But here may an objection be raiſed from *Object.*

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2 Cor. 12. 9.

Reason 3.

3. The godly are more able to grapple with strong temptations then weaker Christians are, and so God suites the service and sufferings of his people, to the proportion of the strength of grace.

3. Another reason may bee taken from the devill, from that malice which he bears to all the people of God, and especially to those who have most grace; whom God loves most, the devill hates most. When the voice from Heaven said to Christ, *Thou art my wel-beloved Son*, then came the devill to assault and to tempt him. If you are the objects of Gods deerest love, you will be the objects of the devils deepest rage: and though he cannot damn thy soule, yet he will trouble thy conscience; if he cannot break thy head, he will bruise thy heel.

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1 Ioh 5 18. 1 Ioh. 2, 18.

that of *John*, where it is ſaid, *He that is born of God, ſinneth not, and keepeth himſelfe that the wicked One toucheth him not: and that they which are ſtrong have overcome the wicked one.* And if this be ſo, how can that be truth, that ſtrong temptations from the devill, may be conſiſtent with ſtrong grace in the heart?

Sol. When it is ſaid, *the wicked one toucheth him not*, it is not to be taken abſolutely, as if the devill did not tempt a man at all, therefore there muſt be a reſtriction of the clauſe, *he touches him not*, that is, with a deadly touch; and ſo *Cajetan*, *This phraſe excludes not the kinds of temptations, but that we are not hurt or eternally deſtroyed by them.* But I conceive rather that theſe words have a peculiar reference to the 16. verſe, where is mention made of a ſin unto death; the Devill ſhall not prevaile, or touch a man ſo, as to commit that ſin which is unto death. Though he may tempt, and will bee continually aſſaulting a man, yet he ſhall never prevaile againſt him, ſo as to draw him to the committing of that ſinne.

Uſe 1. 1. From hence we may learn the indulgence of God to weak Chriſtians; whileſt their graces are weak, their temptations ſhall not be ſtrong. God will not put weak Chriſtians upon ſuch ſtrong trials, as thoſe who have obtained greater meaſures of grace. Not every man in *Davids* Army was put to break through the Army of the Philiſtines to fetch of the waters of the Well of *Bethlehem*,

hem, but *Davids* three worthies. God will not put young Converts to break through an Hoſt of temptations untill they ſhall have obtained experience and ſtrength of grace to grapple with them.

2. Hence alſo learn, that men of the ſtrongeſt and moſt eminent gifts and graces ought not to preſume upon their own ſtrength. *Uſe* 2. *Conſider thy ſelfe, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* Gal. 6. 1. Thou which art moſt *ſpirituall*, take heed leſt thou be foiled. Some mens pride may make them think they are above *Ordinances*, yet their own experience may ſatisfie them that they are not above *temptations*; and certainly they which are not above *temptations*, will ſtill ſtand in need of *Ordinances*; now no man in the world, either is or ſhall be above temptation; if any, ſurely *Adam* would, yet he in Paradiſe, the beſt of places; and in Innocency, the beſt of ſtates, was not exempted from the temptations of the devill, and thereby fel; therefore let no man preſume upon his own ſtrength.

3. Remember this for thy comfort, that though the devill tempt thee with ſtrong temptations, yet he ſhall never have his will againſt thee. It is true, a godly man may fall into that particular act unto which the devill tempts him, yet as to the devils generall aime (the damning of thy ſoule) hee ſhall never have his will. It is a notable expreſſion that of our Saviour to *Peter*; ſaies he, *Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as* Luk. 22. 31.

wheat: Satan hath desired *to have thee*, that was the devils generall aime. Though he may have his will as to a particular act, and thou maiest yield to his temptation, yet he shall never carry thee with himselfe into hell.

4. Remember to your great comfort, you who are the people of God, and harrassed with the devils temptations; thou complainest that they are great for kinde, long for continuance, and the more dangerous because suited to thy present condition. Remember, that thus the Devill dealt with Jesus Christ, his temptations were *suited*, *continued*, and for kinds, *grosse*, being to distrust providence, to self-murder, and to blasphemy; and why was all this, but for thy comfort? he suffered being tempted, that he might be able to pity, compassionate and succour thee, being in the same condition. Heb. 2. 18.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

Sermon IX At *Lawrence Jury, London*, 1651.

My son, Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.

WE proceed now to the second Case of conscience, concerning strength of grace, which is this:

Case 2.

Whether strength of grace may be consistent with strength of lust and corruption in the heart

In the answering whereof, I shall speak to these particulars.

1. When

1. When may corruptions be ſaid to bee ſtrong?
2. Why thoſe that have ſtrong grace, have many times ſtrong corruptions?
3. What ſtrong corruptions are they that thoſe that are ſtrong in grace, are moſt ſubject unto?
4. In what caſes, and with what limitations may ſtrength of corruptions conſiſt with ſtrength of grace?

1. *When may corruptions and luſts be ſaid to be ſtrong in the ſoule?* *Queſt.* 1.

1. When ſins are committed with complacency. Sin at firſt is like a ſnake that is almoſt ſtarved by reaſon of the cold, and is very weak and feeble; but if it be laid in the boſome, then it gathers ſtrength, and after a while ſin revives and becomes a delight in the ſoule. If thou wert at firſt troubled at ſin, and afterwards takeſt pleaſure in ſin, its a ſigne that ſinne hath a great hand over thee. Thus God complaines of his people, *What hath my beloved to doe in my houſe——When thou doſt evill then thou rejoiceſt.* Wee may know the power and ſtrength of corruption in us, by ſins activity in us, and by our chearfulneſſe and complacency in ſin. *Anſ.* 1. Ier. 11. 15.

2. By the frequency of ſin: as a relapſe into a diſeaſe, argues the ſtrength of that peccant humour in the body: ſo reiterated and multiplied acts of the ſame ſin, argue the power and ſtrength of that ſin in our hearts. Corruption gathers ſtrength even as grace doth, *Anſ.* 2.

by the frequent acting and exercise of it.

Anſ. 3. 3. When ſinne is perſiſted in againſt the checks of conſcience. As it argues the ſtrength of a ſtream, that it bears down before it whatſoever bank would check the courſe of it: So it alſo argues that there is a ſtrong current of corruption in thy ſoul, that bears down before it all the warnings, checks and reproofes of conſcience.

Queſt. 2. 2. *Why have thoſe that have the ſtrongeſt graces, many times alſo the ſtrongeſt corruptions?*

Anſ. 1. 1. It ariſeth from the naturall temperature and conſtitution of the body, which doth diſpoſe men to ſome ſin more then another, although they have ſuch eminency of grace; and hence it is, that thoſe who are naturally and conſtitutionally paſſionate, and given to anger, though they may have a great meaſure of grace, yet what adoe have they to bridle in their anger? what adoe to be greatly angry, and not greatly ſinfull? And ſo ſuch whoſe temperature inclines them to be luſtfull, though they have much grace, yet all little enough to ſuppreſſe luſtfull thoughts and wanton looks in them.

Anſ. 2. 2. God ſuffers this to humble his people, and to keep them humble under their great meaſures of grace. It is obſervable in nature, that thoſe creatures which have the moſt excellency in them, have ſomething alſo of defect and deformity in them, as if the God of nature did it to keep them humble. The Peacock hath glittering feathers, and yet black

black feet; The Swan hath white feathers, but under that a black skin; The Eagle hath many excellencies, quick ſight, and high flight, but yet very ravenous; The Camell and Elephant are great and ſtately creatures, but of a deformed ſhape: So it is in the ſtate of grace, God doth ſuffer ſome ſtrong and unſubdued corruptions to remaine in them, who have not only truth, but ſtrength of grace, and this is to keep them humble. Thus *Paul* after his great Revelation, had a meſſenger of Satan to buffet him, and a thorne in the fleſh to afflict and keep him humble: the thorn in the fleſh did let out the impoſtumated matter of pride out of his heart. And the conſiderations of their corruptions doth much affect the hearts of the godly, that they become, 1. More condeſcending and compaſſionate to the weak. 2. They doe depend leſs upon their own righteouſneſſe. They ſee it is vaine to think of eſtabliſhing their own righteouſneſs, and that it is too weak a foundation to lay the weight and ſtreſſe of their ſalvation upon: the Covering is too narrow, and the bed is too ſhort for them to reſt quietly upon. 3. They are hereby brought to think better of themſelves, yea to judge themſelves *the leaſt of Saints and the greateſt of ſinners.* 2 Cor. 12. 7.

3. This is from Satans malice, who if he can draw out great corruptions from them who are eminent in grace: *Anſ.* 3.

1. He thereby aimes to blemiſh Religion

and to darken the honour of profeſſion, and in this cate uſually fights againſt none, *great nor ſmall but the King of Iſrael*, viz. ſuch as are eminent for holineſſe. When *David* fell into thoſe great ſins of murder and adultery, Satan had a main end granted him, to make the way of true Religion ſtink and be abhorred.

2 Sam. 12. 14.

2. Hereby Satan hath his end to imbolden thoſe that are weak to ſin. The ſins and great miſcarriages of ſuch as are great Profeſſors are great ſtumbling blocks in the way of the weak to make them fall.

1 Cor. 8. 10

3. Hereby the peace and purity of conſcience is violated; the devill will play at ſmall game rather then at no game: and if he cannot prevaile to damn thy ſoul, yet he will endeavour to diſquiet thy conſcience.

Queſt. 3. 3. *What are thoſe great temptations and ſins unto which ſtrong beleevers are incident?*

Anſ. 1. 1. To loſe thoſe ſtrong affections which they had at their firſt Converſion. Holy *Greenham* complained, that it was very difficult to keep together his old diſcretion and young zeale.——Young Chriſtians (as hath been already obſerved) have ſtrong affections, and but weak judgements. Their heat is more then their light. Their preſent apprehenſion and ſenſe is great and high, their experience little and low; And ſo alſo ſtrong Chriſtians, who may have much grace, yet the flood and flaſh of affections may be much abated; and it is the fault of old Profeſſors

feſsors, that they doe not labour to maintain the primitive vigour and vivacity of their first affections; they are too apt *to leave their first love*, yet we muſt know they do not decay ſo as to be bankrupts in grace. In the godly the decay and declining, though it may be great yet it is neither totall nor finall; though he may faile, yet he is not a bankrupt, he hath ſtill a ſtock remaining which can never be quite ſpent, a fountaine which can never be quite dry. *He hath in him a well of water ſpringing up to eternall life.* The water of a fountaine may be mudded, but it will cleare it ſelfe again. It may be damm'd up in one place, but it will break out in another; ſo it is with grace. A tree, you know, in Winter-ſeaſon, the fruit and leaves fall off, and it ſeems as if it were dead, but there is life in the root; ſo it is in Chriſtians, their beauty and bloſsome may fall off, their fruit dry up, their leaves drop off, the beauty, the exerciſe and the fruits of grace may ceaſe for a time and yet *the root of the matter is in them.* It often fares with old Profeſsors, as it did with old *David*, of whom it is ſaid, that all the cloaths he did weare, *could not get or keep heat in him:* So they, all the duties they perform, and all the Ordinances they enjoy, cannot keep up that youthfull heat of vigorous affections which once they had. Many of Gods children have not now as once they had, ſuch complacency in God, ſuch fervency in prayer, ſuch attention in hearing, ſuch delight

Rev. 2. 3, 4.

Iohn 4. 14.

Iob 19. 28.

1 King. 1. 1.

delight in Sabbaths, ſuch mournfulneſſe and tenderneſſe of ſpirit, ſuch hatred of ſin. Now they have not ſuch aggravating thoughts of ſinne, as in former times, nor the occaſions unto ſinne, ſo avoided as formerly. How many are there, who heretofore lookt on every ſinne as an heinous evill, but now do not ſo: time was when every gnat ſeemed a camell, and every mote a beam, and every mole-hill a mountain, but now they can extenuate and excuſe their ſinne. Heretofore the moſt pleaſing ſinne was abominable, the ſmalleſt deteſtable, and the higheſt intolerable, but it is otherwiſe now through ſpirituall decaies and abatement in our affections. There are many heretofore when they fell into ſin, were wont to walke ſadly, to ſigh deeply, weep bitterly, pray affectionately; but now doe not theſe things with thoſe warm and working affections as formerly. The time was when many Profeſſors of Religion prepared themſelves for holy duties with more care, attended to them with more diligence, delighted in them with more complacency, and gained more profit and edification by them then they do now. And that is the firſt ſinne, that thoſe who have grace, both in truth and ſtrength, are apt to fall into, *viz.* ſpirituall decay.

Anſ. 2. 2. Such as are ſtrong Chriſtians are very ſubject to ſpirituall pride, and to be highly conceited of their own gifts, parts and graces. Spirituall pride is a ſecret ſpirituall corruption

ruption, that is in the moſt ſpirituall and gracious heart; it is a bad fruit that grows on the beſt root: there is nothing better then grace, and there is nothing more abominable then ſinne, and there is no ſinne ſo bad as pride, and there are none ſo apt to fall into this ſinne of pride, as they that have much grace, and there is nothing weakens a ſtrong Chriſtian more then pride, and nothing argues weakneſſe more then this boaſting.

Anſ. 3. 3. To behave themſelves with contempt and ſupercilious-neſſe towards weak Chriſtians, is an ordinary fault of the ſtrong. There is not any one thing in Scripture more often mentioned then this, that we ſhould not deſpiſe or diſcourage the weak; which notes an aptneſſe in the ſtrong to be faulty herein. *Let us not judge one another any more.* The word μηκέτι notes, they were wont to do ſo before. Spirituall pride is a root of bitterneſſe, which bears theſe two bitter fruits. 1. An over-valuing of our ſelves. 2. An undervaluing of other mens perſons and gifts.

Rom. 14. 1, 2, 3. Verſe 13. Μηκέτι ἀλλήλους κρίνωμεν

4. Strong Chriſtians are apt to put too much duty and taske upon the weak.—— *Johns* Diſciples failed in this towards the Diſciples of Chriſt about faſting. Strong Chriſtians ſhould deale tenderly with the weake, they ſhould excuſe their failings, conceale their weakneſſes, commend their performances, cheriſh their forwardneſs, reſolve their doubts, beare their burdens, and thereby make the way of Religion to be lovely

Mat. 9. 16.

lovely and amiable to them: whereas by their too much auſterity the weak are diſheartned at their firſt entrance.

5. To be content with meaſures of grace. How apt are they that have grace, to ſay in one ſenſe, as he ſaid in another, *Soule, take thine eaſe, thou haſt goods laid up for many yeares*; and hereupon many grow ſlack and careleſſe in holy duties, and do not improve ordinances for the increaſe of their graces. The beſt of Chriſtians are apt to fall into this ſatiety, then which nothing can be more prejudiciall to the ſoule. The Devill tempts thoſe that have but little grace, to thinke they have none, and thoſe that have more grace, to think they have enough. The beſt are apt to miſtake themſelves in this, to think that there is a juſt dimenſion and full growth of grace attainable in this life: Whereas indeed the beſt improvement of having much grace, is to deſire more, and not to be ſatisfied with any meaſure of grace, *till we come to a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſſe of Chriſt*, and that is not attainable in this life. Perfection is the aime of this life, but it is rewarded of another life. We ſhould endeavour after Perfection in grace, but we ſhall not attaine it till grace be perfected in glory.

Luk. 12. 19.

Eph. 4. 13.

Queſt. 4. 4. *In what caſes, and with what limitations may ſtrength of corruptions conſiſt with ſtrength of grace?*

The reſolving of this queſtion is of very much

much uſe to the ſoule: for the ſoule that is over-maſtered with ſtrong corruptions, may not only queſtion the ſtrength of his grace, but the being of it. How may I then know, that I have both the truth and ſtrength of grace in me, though I am over-powred ſometimes by ſtrong and prevailing corruptions?

1. If you maintain in you a ſtrong oppoſition againſt your corruptions. The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit; *but doth the Spirit luſt againſt the fleſh?* though you cannot fully ſubdue ſinne, yet doe you ſtrongly oppoſe it? if ſo, there is grace, and ſtrength of grace too, which is able to make and hold up this oppoſition. An uncontrolled ſubjection unto ſin, argues the ſtrength of ſin; but an irreconcileable oppoſition of ſin, argues the ſtrength of grace. Strength of grace is not ſo much ſeen in thoſe particular acts of ſuppreſſion, and actuall overcomming of it, as in that conſtant and habituall frame of heart in the oppoſition of ſinne. *Anſ.* 1. Gal. 5. 17.

2. Though ſin be ſtrong, yet grace may be ſtrong too in thy ſoule, if thou haſt a ſtrong meaſure of humiliation: though thy ſinne be great, if thy ſorrow be great too, it evidenceth thy grace is ſo alſo. It was great grace in *Manaſſeh*, that he *humbled himſelf greatly*, though he had been a very great ſinner. *Anſ.* 2. 1 Chron. 33. 12.

3. If thou haſt ſtrong cries to God againſt thy ſins, this argues grace, though it be ready to bee *deflowred* by thy corruptions. If when

when corruptions and temptations prevaile, thou praiest to the Lord with *strong cries and* Deut. 22. 26,27. *teares*, this argues grace, yea, and the strength of grace.

Ans. 4. 4. If thou hast strong affections that carry thee to Christ, certainly thou hast grace, though thy strong corruptions often carry thee from Christ. *Peter* had more infirmities and corruptions and sinnes, then all the Disciples besides (excepting *Judas*) Hee took Christ aside, gave him carnall counsell, and Mat. 16.22. said as to his sufferings, *Farre be it from thee Lord, this shall not bee unto thee*; for which Christ said to him, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* He dreams of merit, and boasts of what he had done for Christ, as it is observed of him, Mat. 19.27. when he said to Christ, *Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?* *Peter* of all the Disciples was the most confident of his own strength, and boasts what hee would doe and suffer for Christ; Mat. 26.33, 35. *Though all men should be offended because of thee; yet will I never be offended. And if I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* Nay and presently after this confident undertaking, *Peter* denies Christ, and swears and curses that he knew him not. Some observe, that *Peters* cursing, was not only his cursing of himselfe if he knew Christ, but that he also curled Jesus Christ, that so he might appeare to them to be none of his disciples; and yet notwithstanding all this, *Peter* had not only truth and reality, but eminency

nency and ſtrength of grace: for though temptations and corruptions did ſometimes prevail, yet he had ſtrong affections towards Jeſus Chriſt; he did and ſuffered that which few or none of the other diſciples did.

1. He was the man, that of all the diſciples wept moſt bitterly for his ſins. Mat. 26. 75.

2. *Peter* was the firſt that ran to the ſepulchre, and went into the ſepulchre to ſee what was become of Chriſt. Ioh. 22. 5.

3. He was the man, who hearing that Chriſt was riſen and on the ſea-ſhore, leap'd into the ſea for joy. Ioh. 21. 7.

4. He was the man that made the firſt Sermon, and firſt preached the Goſpel after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt. Act. 1. 15.

5. Hee had that love to Chriſt which was as ſtrong as death; for he ſuffered death, and was crucified (as ſay Eccleſiaſticall Writers) but would not be crucified, but with his heels upwards, deeming, it too great an honour to be crucified in the ſame manner that his Lord and Maſter was; ſo that the ſtrength of his affections, did argue, notwithſtanding his great failings, the ſtrength of grace in him.

Application.

To make application of what hath been ſpoken in this caſe of Conſcience.——

Uſe 1.

Though in the caſes before mentioned, ſtrength of grace may be conſiſtent with ſtrength of corruptions; yet there are other caſes wherein they are altogether inconſiſtent.

1. When

1. When the ſtrength and workings of corruptions are not clearly diſcovered to the ſoule: for grace alwaies, as a light ſet up in the ſoule, doth diſcover the darkneſſe of corruption.

2. Where corruptions are not ſenſibly bewailed, it is to bee feared that there is not ſtrength of grace.

3. Where occaſions to thoſe ſtrong prevailing ſins and corruptions are not heedfully avoided. Certainly if thou haſt grace to make thee ſenſible of what corruptions thou art incident unto, thy grace will make thee walke ſo circumſpectly, as to avoid all occaſions leading thereunto

4. If they be not ſtrongly reſiſted, and the beginnings of each corruption not diligently ſuppreſſed: in this caſe ſtrength of grace and ſtrength of corruption are utterly inconſiſtent.

5. Though there may be ſtrong grace and ſtrong corruption in the ſoule, yet the reigne of any one corruption is utterly inconſiſtent with grace and the ſtrength of it. *Let not ſin reign in your mortal bodies. Sin ſhall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace*, which is not to be underſtood in the *Antinomiſts* ſenſe, that beleevers are not under the mandatory power of the morall Law: But the meaning of the word (Law) as *Beza* interprets it, *is the Law of ſin*, and ſo the Apoſtle *Paul chap.7. 3.* mentions *a law in his members that did war againſt the law*

Rom.6. 12. 14. expounded and compared with Rom. 7.23.

law of his mind, and did bring him into captivity to the law of ſinne, that is; ſin would have ſwaied in him with the power and force of a law. And this argued grace and the ſtrength of grace in *Paul*, that though he was over-borne by the ſtrength of corruption and ſin, and taken priſoner by it, yet he never yielded to it as a lawfull Soveraigne; for ſo he adds, *verſe 29. So then, with the mind I ſerve the law of God, but with my fleſh the law of ſin.* It may bee ſaid of the corruptions in Gods children, what was ſhewed to *Daniel* concerning the beaſts, *they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a ſeaſon.* Rom. 7. 25. Dan. 9. 12.

6. When we ſay there is a conſiſtency between grace and corruption; I would be underſtood of ſpirituall and inward corruptions, as hardneſſe of heart, ſpirituall pride, deadneſſe in duties: for into groſſe, externall, open acts of evill, ſtrong Chriſtians doe ſeldome fall.

7. We muſt alſo be further informed, that if wee conſider particular acts of ſinne, ſome one luſt may ſeem to bee more ſtrong in a godly Chriſtian, then in a meer morall man. As for inſtance, in the caſe of luſt, when we conſider how *David* did abuſe his neighbours wife, and how *Abimelech* would not touch anothers man wife; one would have judged *David* the heathen, and *Abimelech* the beleever, and therefore the ſtrength of grace or corruption muſt not be judged by any

one particular act when ſome impetuous temptation hath prevailed.

8. Laſtly, we are to know that a corruption may be really weakned when ſenſibly ſtrong. As a man in a Fever is ſeemingly ſtrong, but is really weak; ſo corruption may be then moſt enfeebled when in our apprehenſion it is moſt inraged; it may rave and rage when it is crucifying. As a coal glowes moſt juſt before its going out; a candle burnt down in the ſocket gives a blaze a little before it be extinct: ſo it is when corruption is ready to expire. As in a meer moral man ſin may be reſtrained when it is not ſubdued; corruption may be quiet where it is not mortified: So in a regenerate perſon it may be ſubdued and mortified, where yet it may rage as if unreſtrained. A mans laſt gaſpe may be the ſtrongeſt breath: So when corruption is ready to give up the Ghoſt, it may ſeem to breath ſtrongeſt. As a bird may flutter when his neck is broken: ſo ſin may ſeemingly reſiſt grace, when the power, ſtrength and life of it is utterly broke.

2 TIM 2. 1.

Be ſtrong in the grace of God that is in Chriſt Ieſus.

Sermon X. *At Lawrence Jury, London, April 13. 1651.*

WE have already handled two great *Caſes of Conſcience* about *ſtrength of grace,*

grace. about the conſiſtency of ſtrong temptations, and ſtrong corruptions with the ſtrength of grace, and ſhall now proceed to a third Caſe which is this,

3. *Whether ſtrength of grace may conſiſt with the want of thoſe ſtrong affections, which Chriſtians have had at their firſt converſion?* *Caſe 3.*

In anſwering whereof, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew three things.

1 When a man may be ſaid to loſe his firſt affections?

2. In what Caſes may a ſtrong Chriſtian want ſtrong affections?

3. Whence it is that thoſe that have ſtrong grace may want ſuch ſtrong affections as they had at their firſt Converſion.

1. *When may a Chriſtian be ſaid to loſe his firſt affections?* Affections are ſtly compared to the pulſes of the ſoul, by which may judgement be given of the ſtate and temper of the ſoul; and that we may know when theſe affections beat low and are decaied, we may make judgement hereof. *Queſt. 1. Anſ. 1.*

1. When wee have not ſuch eager deſires after duties. It is very remarkable, that at a Chriſtians firſt converſion, he is ſo earneſt and eager after holy duties, that he will hardly allow time for the duties of his particular calling; nay, how have men at firſt tyed themſelves to heare ſo many Sermons, make ſo many Prayers, read ſo many Chapters, ſpend ſo many houres in holy Meditation by themſelves, and good conference

with other Christians? But alas, afterward this fervour begins to cool and remit, and men pray lesse, and heare more seldome, and this is from the multiude of their worldly occasions. Usually men at their first conversion, (which as Divines have observed) ordinarily doth fall out between the eighteenth and twenty eighth yeare of their age, (though God indeed be tyed to no yeare) yet men at that age have usually lesse of the world, and so it comes to passe, that afterward when the cares, and profits, and pleasures of the world steale away their affections, that they grow much more remisse then they were at the beginning.

Ans. 2. 2. Affections may be judged to be decaied when we have not such ravishing joies as we were wont to have. How many have been at first in *Davids* frame of heart, *I was glad whē they said to me, come, let us go into the house of the Lord?* but afterwards the overflowing of this flood of joy by degrees hath abated.

Psal. 122. 1.

Ans. 3. 3. When sensible profit by Ordinances, is abated. A man may profit by Ordinances, and yet not be sensible of that his profiting. A Christian may grow at the root in solidity of grace, though it may be not shoot up so much in blossomes of affection.

Quest. 2. 2. *In what Cases may a strong Christian want strong affections?*

Answ. 1. 1. In case you have lesse sinne in duties, though lesse affections. A weak young convert hath oftentimes much affection in holy duties

duties, but much corruption too. They are very ſubject to raſhneſſe and precipitancy in their prayers, and to be proud of any ſmall meaſures of grace in duty, and too apt to have carnall dependance upon their duties: But old experienc'd Chriſtians, as they have often leſſe affection, ſo leſſe ſinne in duties. Papiſts have very much affection in the performance of their devotions: but alaſs, they have the leaven of this errour in their beſt duties, that they think they merit by them: but grown and knowing Chriſtians, though they may not be ſo affectionate in duty, as the weak, yet they may exerciſe much more grace then they do. And ſo alſo it is after duties are performed: Weak Chriſtians are apt to indulge their corruptions afterwards, thinking they have made a compenſation for their ſins by their duties: But an experienced grown Chriſtian, though not ſo affectionate in duty, yet he is carefull afterwards that he doe not by ſin ſpoile all his duties.

2. A ſtrong Chriſtian may want ſtrong affections, in caſe he hath ſtrength of judgement to recompence the want of his affections. *Young trees are more ſappy, but old trees are more ſolid*; wherefore the Apoſtle praies for the *Philippians*, not only that *their love might abound*, but that *their judgement might alſo abound*. As a man that is come to his full age, though he do not grow in bulke and extenſion of parts; yet he grows intenſively, *Anſ.* 2. Phil. 1. 9.

and in the conſolidation of the parts of the body: ſo old and experienced Chriſtians, though they have not ſo much affection; yet they have more ſolidity and clearneſſe of judgement, more experimental knowledge in the profound myſteries of the Goſpell, and more diſtinct apprehenſions of the deepe things of Chriſt. A ſtrong beleever, what he wants in affections, he hath compenſated to him in a diſtinct and experimentall knowledge of the deceitfulneſſe of his heart, of the vanity of the world of the ſinfulneſſe of ſinne, and of the tranſcendent excellency of Chriſt. New converts are raſh, inconſiderate, injudicious; and therefore we have a promiſe made to new converts, that they ſhall proceed in grace. It is a promiſe made to the Gentiles when the Kingdome of Chriſt ſhall come amongſt them, that though at the firſt they were raſh, yet it is ſaid, *The heart of the raſh ſhall underſtand knowledge, and the tongue of the ſtammerers ſhall be ready to ſpeak plain.* Affection without knowledge will be but raſhneſſe, which (like metall in a young horſe) will be apt to precipitate him, and make him ſtumble. An experienced Chriſtian, though he have not ſo much ſeeming metall in his affection, yet ſhall rid more way to heaven by faire then a young Convert, and that without feare of ſtumbling. At the firſt kindling of the fire, there may be more ſmoak, though afterward the flame will be clearer: So when at firſt thou haſt much affection,

Iſa. 32. 4.

after-

afterwards thou ſhalt have a clearer judgement.

3. A ſtrong Chriſtian may want ſtrong affections, in caſe it proceed from a naturall temper, and not from a ſinfull careleſſe diſtemper. There are ſome perſons that are naturally of a ſoft and tender diſpoſition, and theſe are naturally more affectionate; nay, the woman who is the weaker veſſell, commonly her heart holds moſt affection: And ſo likewiſe there are ſome who naturally are more bound up in their affections, and are of a reſerved temper, who naturally doe not break out into any great expreſſion either of the paſſion of joy or griefe. We read in the Goſpell, that they that expreſt moſt affection to Chriſt at his death, and made the moſt paſſionate lamentation for him, were the *women*, who naturally are of a more melting diſpoſition. Some mens diſpoſitions are like ice, they will eaſily thaw and melt; others like iron, it muſt be a hot fire that will melt them down: So it is, ſome men will be more affectionate upon a ſmall occaſion then others upon a greater, and this is from naturall diſpoſition. *Melanchon* was not ſo affectionate as *Luther*, but it is obſerved that he was more judicious. *Anſ.* 3. Luk. 23. 27.

4. In caſe of ſickneſſe and old age, and bodily weakneſſe. He that hath ſtrength of grace may yet want ſtrength of affection. The expreſſion of our affection depends much upon the temperature of the body, if *Anſ.* 4.

bodily ſtrength and vigour be impaired, our affections muſt needs flag. As the ebbing and flowing of the ſea depends upon the motion and influence of the Moon: So our affections doe ebb and flow much what, as the ſtrength or weakneſſe of the body hath an influence upon them. As a Muſician when he is grown old, cannot ſo dexterouſly handle an inſtrument, as when he was young, though perhaps he hath now more judgement and experience in muſick; ſo it is in old age, that brings in experience in the waies of God, yet may abate affections. Old age and ſickneſſe makes the body like a tired horſe to the active ſoule; an active traveller would fain ride away to his journies end, but his horſe is tired. An aged ſickly Chriſtian may have as much grace and more then he had at firſt, and yet not be ſo able to pray; and ſo a Miniſter not ſo able to preach affectionately as before; and this from the indiſpoſition of the body.

Queſt. 3. 3. *Whence is it that thoſe that have ſtrength of grace, may yet want thoſe ſtrong affections which they had at their firſt converſion?*

Anſw. 1. 1. Becauſe at firſt converſion grace was but particularly imploied, which afterwards was more diffuſed and generally imploied. When much water runs in one channell, it makes the ſtreame the ſtronger; but when there are many rivulets cut out, though there is as much and more water, yet there is not the ſame ſtrength of ſtream: So it is at our

our firſt converſion, all our affections made but up one ſtream, and ſo our affections ſeemed the ſtronger. A new convert hath not ſo many duties to perform as a grown Chriſtian hath, becauſe he doth not know ſo many duties. It may be at firſt all his affections run out to pray, and heare the Word, and read good books, and whilſt all the affections run in this one channell, they ſeem to be very ſtrong; whereas a grown Chriſtian he hath not only theſe generall duties, but many particular duties of his calling and relations to follow, he hath many duties to perform to God and men, which a new convert knowes not, and therefore it is that though his affections may ſeem weaker, yet his grace is as ſtrong as before and ſtronger.

2. This is from the newneſſe of the condition. Naturally we are much affected with any new thing, as for example, for a man that hath been many years in a dark dungeon, to be ſuddenly brought into the light, the ſuddenneſſe of the change would much affect a man. This is the ſtate of our ſouls at our firſt converſion; we are *therefore brought from darkneſſe into light, and from the power of ſatan unto God.* By the grace of converſion, *God cals us out of darkneſſe into his marvellous light:* and becauſe it is ſo marvellous, therefore it doth ſo much affect. The change at firſt converſion is very great, a man becomes another man, and man is ſo affected, that he is put into a kinde of aſtoniſhment.

Anſ. 2.

1 Per. 2. 9.

Yet

Yet in this caſe we muſt diſtinguiſh between ſolid affections, and floting and tranſient paſſions, which do weare off preſently, and vaniſh ſuddenly. The affections of ſome Chriſtians, eſpecially young ones, are like thoſe colours which are not in graine, they will ſoon fade. It is with a young Convert as with a man going to execution, while hee is upon the ladder a pardon is unexpectedly brought, how will this man be tranſported with joy? he will leap for joy, he will in that caſe be all joy and exultation for the preſent, and it may be afterward the fluſh and torrent of his joy is abated, though his life be as deare to him as ever: So when the ſoule hath been brought by the Law of God to a ſight of its loſt condition, and then the Goſpel hath proclaimed a pardon, and the Spirit of God hath ſet on the comfort of that pardon upon his heart, O what raviſhments hath that ſoule for the preſent! which perhaps he ſhall not long retain, the violence of his joy is abated, but the ſolidity of it remains. The ſoule is much affected with its firſt meeting with Chriſt, and though the fluſh of that joy be over, yet the ſouls love to Chriſt is as much, and its prizing Communion with Chriſt the ſame. The Cripple when he was reſtored to ſtrength, went leaping and praiſing God, becauſe the unexpectedneſſe of the cure did mightily affect his heart; and this is a ſecond reaſon why thoſe who are grown and ſolid Chriſtians, yet perhaps may not retaine the

Acts 3.8.

ſame

ſame meaſure of affections they had at their firſt converſion.

3. A third reaſon may bee taken from Gods indulgence to young Converts, who uſually gives in comfort according to the neceſſity of his people. It is with God our heavenly Father, as with naturall Parents, they are moſt tender over their new-borne children. That parable of the returning Prodigall is very full to this purpoſe; his father did not only receive him mercifully, but bountifully too, he gave him more then was for neceſſity; not only *ſhooes*, but a ring; not only *clothes*, but the *beſt robe*; not only *bread*, but the *fatted calf*, and muſick at this Feaſt, and all this was for this newly converted and repenting ſonne, though his father did not entertain him ſo every day. So our God, at our firſt converſion expreſſeth much of his bounty and indulgence to his children, though afterward we may have the ſame love of God, and the ſame love to God, though the expreſſions may not be the ſame now, as formerly in thoſe daies of Gods bounty.

Anſ. 3.

Luk. 15. 22.

Let us from hence learn, that though we have loſt thoſe affections which we had, yet we muſt,

Uſe.

1. Labour to be ſenſible of, and humbled for thoſe decaies. A decaied condition is an uncomfortable condition; though thou haſt ſo much grace as will bring thee to heaven, yet by thy decaies thou wilt be very uncomfortable here on earth.

2. La-

2. Labour to get those decaies repaired. If thou *hast left thy first love, repent and doe thy first works.* Rev. 2.4,5.

3. Make up the want of former affections in solidity of knowledge and judgement; and if the candle give not so great a blaze; let it give a more clear and constant light.

4. Labour to keep up the primitive vigor of your affections.

1. Remember you may lose that in a short time, which you may be a long time in recovering. A man may lose more strength in one weeks sickness, then many months will make reparation. A wound may be quickly made, but not so soon cured. Philosophers will tell us, that the way from the habit to the privation is far easier, then from the privation to the habit; it is far easier to make a seeing man blind, then to make a blind man see; so it is far easier to lose our holy affections, then it is to recover them.

2. Labour to keep up your holy affections: for the truth of grace is more discerned by our affections then our actions. Acts of grace may be easier dissembled then gracious affections. A painter may paint the colour, but not the heat of the fire.

3. Labour to keep up affections as they were at first, because it is very hard to retaine them: it is hard to keep them wound up to any height. Flush of spirituall joy is like the sea, the tide doth not so flow, but the ebb doth fall as low. *Bernard* said of these strong gusts

guſts, and great fluſh of theſe ſpirituall joies and gracious affections, *They come but ſeldom, and ſtay but a ſhort time.* As in nature there is a ſpring, and then the fall of the leafe, and one day is clear, and another is cloudy: ſo it is with the beſt Chriſtian, his affections are not alwaies at the ſame pitch, at the ſame height; but it ſhould be our endeavour to cheriſh and maintaine in our ſoules our firſt flouriſhing affections, in and towards the waies of God.

Rara hora, brevis mora.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

My ſon, Be ſtrong in the grace of God that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

Serm. XI. *At Lawrence Jury, London,* April 13. 1651.

HAving diſpatched three Caſes of Conſcience concerning ſtrength of grace; I now proceed to a fourth, viz.

Whether a man that hath ſtrength of grace, may want the comfort of his grace?

Caſe 4.

I ſhall anſwer this queſtion affirmatively; A man that hath the ſtrength of grace, yet may want the comfort of it: Strength of grace (as you have heard) doth not exempt a man from temptations from the devill, nor from deſertions from God. It is an undoubted rule, there may bee ſtrength of grace, where there is not the comfort and evidence of it. A child of light may walk in darkneſſe for

Anſ.

for a time; and though he have the holy Ghoſt working grace, and increaſing grace in his heart, yet he may want the oile of gladneſſe, 1 Iohn 2.27 though he have received a precious *anoynting* of grace. A child of God, as to his ſpirituall condition, may for a time be in the ſame condition that *Paul* and the Mariners were in, Acts 27.20. *who for many daies had neither ſunne nor ſtars appearing being under no ſmall tempeſt, hopes of being ſaved being taken away*: So it fares with Gods deareſt children, they may be in the dark, and can ſee no light, they may have the graces of the Spirit, and yet want the comforts of the Spirit.

In the opening of which point I ſhall thus proceed.

1. I will prove this from Scripture, that a child of God may be ſtrong in grace, and yet want the comfort of his grace.
2. I will lay down ſome reaſons why it is thus.
3. Some directions, how thoſe that have grace, and yet doe want the comfort of their graces, ſhould procure unto themſelves the comfort of their graces.
4. And then I ſhall commend ſome comfortable conſiderations to ſuch as have grace but want the comfort of it.

1. For the firſt, I ſhall give you inſtances both in the Old and New Teſtament, that thoſe that have been ſtrong in grace have wanted comfort.

1. *Job*, a man eminent for grace, *a perfect and*

and upright man, and one that feared God and eſchewed evil; and yet you have *Job* complaining, *Wherefore hideſt thou thy face, and holdeſt me for thine enemy?* nay, God did not only hide his face, but handle him as his enemy; for he thus makes his moan, *He tears me in his wrath*; that is to be referred to God, and not unto the devill, or to *Jobs* unmercifull enemies or uncharitable friends. *He teareth me*, that is, *God teareth me. Who in my apprehenſion (ſaith Job) hateth me, and gnaſheth upon me with his teeth, and as an enemy, ſharpneth his eyes upon me.* And that theſe ſad apprehenſions were upon *Job*, that God was his enemy, ſee him further lamenting himſelfe, *He hath deſtroied me on every ſide, and I am gone, and mine hope hath he removed as a tree, he hath alſo kindled his wrath againſt me, and counted me unto him as one of his enemies.* Yea, *deſtruction from God was a terrour to him.*

Iob 13. 24.

Iob 16. 9.

Iob 19. 10. 11.

Iob 31. 23.

2. *Aſaph*, a holy man, yet thus complains, *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promiſe faile for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?* Theſe are the ſad expoſtulations of a troubled ſpirit caſt down under deep dejections, and in the dark, by reaſon of the ſuſpenſion of divine favour.

Pſal. 77. 7.

3. *David*, a man after Gods heart, whoſe gracious breathings through the whole book of Pſalms, ſhew that he was a man of an excellent ſpirit, and had much grace. Yet *David* wanted

wanted the comfort of his grace, when his ſoule was caſt down, and his ſpirit was diſquieted within him. And ſo,

Pſal. 42. 5.

Pſal. 88.

4. *Heman*, a man who for wiſdom ſo eminent, that the Holy Ghoſt uſeth him as an inſtance of wiſdome, *As wiſe as Heman*, and yet in the 88. Pſalme, quite through that Pſalme, was a ſtraine of as ſad a complaint as you ſhall meet withall in the whole book of God. *Thou haſt laid me in the loweſt pit, in darkneſſe, in the deep, thy wrath lyeth hard upon me, and thou haſt afflicted me with all thy waves.* So little comfort had theſe holy men, though they were eminent in grace. It is true of many deare children of God, what was ſaid of the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt; *Whither I go* (ſaith Chriſt) *ye know, and the way ye know*: To which ſpeech of Chriſt, *Thomas* anſwers in the next verſe, *Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt, and how can we know the way? Auguſtine* doth thus reconcile this, *They did know whither Chriſt went, but they durſt not once believe that they had ſuch knowledge, they did not know their own knowledg*: The expreſſions of Chriſt were different from thoſe words of *Thomas*, the Lord Jeſus ſpake as it was; and *Thomas* ſpake as he thought. The Apoſtles had grace, and yet wanted the comfort and aſſurance of it. I will not inſtance here of the Lord Jeſus, who though hee was full of grace and truth, yet he wanted comfort when he was in that bitter agony, and cried out, *My God, my God, why*

Iohn 14. 4, 5. expounded, and reconciled, *Aug.*

why haſt thou forſaken me? Indeed in the new Teſtament there are not ſo many inſtances of thoſe that wanted the comfort of their graces, as wee finde in the Old Teſtament, and the reaſon is this, Profeſſion at the firſt publiſhing and promulgation of the Goſpell, met with ſo many and ſuch ſharp afflictions, that God did indulge them, and made *their inward graces to abound, as their outward ſufferings did abound.* 2 Cor. 1. 4 Theſe inſtances may ſuffice to prove that it is truth, beleevers who are ſtrong in grace, yet may want the comfort of their graces.

2. To give you ſome grounds of this, the reaſons may be drawn, either 1. From God. Or 2. From our ſelves. Or 3. From the devill.

1. Reaſon is from the Lord, to withhold from them to whom he hath given grace, the comfort of their grace.

1. To manifeſt his divine authority and abſolute ſoveraignty over his people. As the naturall light of the day, and darkneſſe of the night are at Gods diſpoſe; ſo alſo is this ſpirituall light of comfort, and the darkneſſe of a deterted and dejected ſpirit. God gives divine and ſpirituall conſolations out of the goodneſs of his will, and withdraws them, to ſhew the abſolutenelle and ſoveraigne liberty of his Will.

2. To let his people know, that comfort is not eſſentiall to holineſſe, neither inſeparably and neceſſarily belonging to grace. Though there cannot bee

true peace, where there is no grace; yet there may be true grace, where there is no peace.

3. God in the dispensation both of grace and comfort, shews himselfe a free and gracious Agent; and all our graces which God works in us, are meerly from Gods grace to us. He will give comfort when, and to whom he pleaseth; but still as a reward of his owne free grace, the comfort of a pardon. The comfortable knowledge of our pardon is as well from Gods free grace, as the pardon it selfe, and therefore Gods suspends the comfort of grace to make us looke up to him for it. When thou repentest, God gives a pardon, but therein he rewards his own work in thee. To give a pardon or sence of a pardon is an act of meer liberality in God.

4. God doth this to put a difference between heaven and earth. Heaven is a place for comfort, earth for duty: earth is for the getting of grace, heaven for the rewarding of grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, like the good master of the Feast, reserves the best for last. The sons of Nobles, when they travell into forrein parts, have no more allowances then what will accommodate their travels, the inheritance is reserved for them, when they come to their fathers house: So beleevers who are strangers and pilgrimes here, they have so much grace and comfort as befits their passage to heaven: but they have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, but is reserved in the heavens

heavens. God thinks it not fit to give conſtant comforts in an inconſtant world, nor ful comforts in an empty world, nor laſting comforts in a tranſitory world.

2. Reaſon may be taken from our ſelves, and that in many regards, that have much grace, yet may have but a little comfort; and this may ſpring from a threefold root in us.

1. From ſomething that is meerly naturall in us.

2. From ſomething that is ſpirituall and good.

3. From ſomething that is evill in us.

1. This may ariſe from the prevalency of a naturall melancholy in the body, whereby the underſtanding may be darkned, the fancy troubled, reaſon perverted, and the ſoul ſadned. Melancholy is the mother of diſcomfort, and the nurſer of doubting. It was (as ſome thinke) depth of Melancholy that prevailed upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, that he did not know, whilſt under the power of that diſtemper, whether he was a man or a beaſt: And in the like manner may this bodily melancholy, ſo farre diſtemper thy ſoul, that thou who haſt grace, yet mayeſt not know whether thou art a child of God, or a child of the devill. It is no more wonder to ſee a melancholy man doubt and queſtion his ſpirituall condition, then it is to ſee a child cry when hee is beaten, or to heare a ſick man groan. You may ſilence a melancholy man when you are not able to comfort him, and

though you may resolve his doubts and scruples by evident and convincing answers and arguments, yet let but such a man retire alone, and brood over his melancholy thoughts, by the prevalency of his perturbing humour, all is forgotten, and he is as unsatisfied, as if you had said nothing to him. And you may perceive that it is the power of melancholy, that is the cause of a mans distemper, when he is very much troubled, and yet can give no distinct account of any particular thing that doth trouble him.

2. This discomfort often ariseth from that which is good in us, *viz.* from that holy jealousie and tenderness of conscience, which makes a child of God suspect and enquire into his condition: and though he have true grace, and much grace, yet he is afraid lest all be but a delusion; in such cases the soule doth so pore on sin and infirmities, that it cannot see its own evidences. A tender conscience is more apt to be dejected in the sight of sinne, then to be comforted in the sense of grace; and the reason of this is, because sin doth more directly fall under the cognizance of our conscience, especially a naturall conscience. *The works of the flesh are manifest*; but the fruits of grace and of the spirit, are not so easily discerned.

Gal. 5. 17.

3. This discomfort usually springs from a root of bitternesse, even in the best of Gods children, and that whereby God doth punish the sins of his people.

1. *Their*

1. *Their quenching the motions of the Spirit.* If you grieve the ſpirit of God, it is juſt with God to grieve your ſpirits: you never ſend Gods Spirit ſad to heaven, but God may make ſad your ſpirits on earth.

Res delicata eſt ſpiritus Dei, ità nos tract at, ſicut tractatur.

2. Sleightineſſe and fearfulneſſe of heart towards God. When children grow ſawcy, peremptory and malapert before their parents, 'tis no wonder if a fathers frowne correct their irreverence. Moſt of thoſe who lie uncomfortably under ſenſe of diſpleaſure of God, may thank themſelves for it, they have provoked God by their bearing themſelves too much upon his love, and growing ſecure and fearleſſe to offend God. God loves to have his children come neer him in an holy confidence that he is their father, but yet to keep their diſtance by humble reverence.

3. Another ſinne that God puniſhes in his children, by withholding comfort from them that are ſtrong in grace, is their ſupercilioufneſſe, contempt and uncompaſſionateneſſe towards others that are but weak in grace. Gods own people are very much to blame herein, in rigour and unmercifulneſſe towards thoſe that are weak in the faith, deſpiſing all that are inferiour to them in gifts and graces, whereby they often *breake the bruiſed reed, and quench the ſmoaking flax*, and want bowels of pity and tenderneſſe towards their brethren. To take down pride, God often brings ſuch, even his own peo-

ple to be low in comfort; and it is but juſt that they ſhould want comfort, who have neglected to comfort and cheriſh thoſe that were weak in grace.

4. A growing, cold, and lazy, and heedleſſe in holy duties. If we put off God without true ſervice, God may juſtly put us off without true comfort. This rule holds in ſpirituall affairs, *He that will not worke ſhall not eat.* If we abate in the ſanctifying worke of the Spirit, it is but juſt that God withhold the comforting work of the Spirit. *The ſluggard,* ſaith *Solomon, hath poverty enough*; ſo if we grow lazy and ſluggiſh in holy duties, it is juſt that our ſtock of comfort do decay. Though holy duties doe not merit comforts, yet comfort uſually riſeth and fals according to our diligence in duties. True grace is never ſo apparent to, and ſenſible in the ſoule, as when it is in action; and therefore want of exerciſe, muſt needs cauſe want of comfort. As fire in the flint is never ſeen or felt, till it be ſtruck out by the Steele: ſo is grace and the comfort of grace, never ſo ſenſible as when it is exerciſed much in holy duties.

5. Any one ſin indulged by, or concealed in the conſcience, is enough to marre all your comfort. Concealed guilt contracts horrour. The candle will never burn cleare whileſt there is a thiefe in it. Sinne in the conſcience is like *Jonah* in the ſhip, which cauſeth a tempeſt, that the conſcience is like a troubled

troubled ſea, whoſe waters cannot reſt: or it is like a mote in the eie, which cauſeth a perpetuall trouble while it is there: or like the wind gathered in the caverns of the earth, makes earthquakes and terrible eruptions. It is juſt with with God, that *a mans own iniquities ſhould correct him, and his back ſliding ſhould reprove him.* Concealed guilt, though it may not bring a child of God to hell, yet for a time it may bring hell into his conſcience. So that by all theſe particulars we may ſee, that if our comforts be abated, we may thank our ſelves for it. Ier. 2, 19. Pro. 14. 14.

3. Reaſon is taken from the reſtleſſe rage and malice of Satan, who when hee cannot do the greater, will doe the leſſe: and if hee cannot damn thy ſoule, he will labour all he can to diſquiet thy conſcience. The devill aimes principally to make us walke ſinfully, and if not ſo, then uncomfortably: if he cannot make us live without God and Chriſt, and grace in the world, then hee endeavours to make us live beſide the comfort of our grace. And hence it is, that many dear children to God, who have truth and ſtrength of grace in them, yet hearkning too much to Satan, live beſide the comfort of their grace.

3. *But what ſhal I do, that want the comfort of my grace, to procure it, that ſo I may have comfort anſwerable to grace?* *Queſt.* 3.

1. Live more in the exerciſe of grace and that is the ready way, not only to in- *Anſ.* 1.

creaſe grace, but to obtaine the comfort of grace. It was the Apoſtolicall ſalutation, *Grace and peace be multiplied.* If grace be multiplied, (and that it will by the exerciſe of it) then peace will alſo be multiplied. *The work of righteouſneſſe ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſſe, quietneſſe and aſſurance for ever.* Iſa. 32. 17. *Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* Pſal. 119. 165.

Anſ. 2. 2. Leave no ſin unrepented of; take heed of guilt of ſin lying on the conſcience; take away the thief out of the candle, and it will burne clear. *If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far from thee, and let not wickedneſſe dwel in thy tabernacles; for thou ſhalt then lift up thy face without ſpot, yea thou ſhalt be ſtedfaſt, and ſhalt not fear. Behold now* (ſaith *Job*) *I have ordered my cauſe, I know that I ſhall be juſtified*; the more ordered our waies are, the more ſteddy and full are our comforts, the more ſin in the ſoul, the leſſe comfort in that ſoule. Iob. 11. 14, 15. Iob 13. 18.

Anſ. 3. 3. Call to minde former experiences that thy ſoule hath had of God. Thus did *David* when by reaſon of the diſcomfort of his ſoule, he cried out, *Why art thou caſt downe O my ſoule, and why art thou diſquieted in me? Oh my God, my ſoule is caſt downe within me, therefore wil I remember thee from the land of* Jordan, *and of the* Hermonites; *that is,* I will remember thee, and what thou didſt at *Jordan*, when thou didſt dry up the river, and thy people paſſed on dry land into *Canaan*. *And I will remember the land of the* Hermonites, Pſal. 42. 5, 6

that

that is, what thou didſt unto *Og* King of *Baſhan*, and to *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*, for *Hermon* was part of the Country of thoſe Kings. So the Pſalmiſt was under great diſcomfort, when he cried, *Wil the Lord caſt me off for ever? Is his mercy clean gone from me, &c.* But he recovers himſelfe out of that ſad caſe by remembring former experiences, for ſo he adds, *ver.* 12. *I will remember the works of the Lord ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate of all thy workes, and talk of thy doings.* Paſt experiences ſhould be preſent incouragements.

Ioſh. 12, 1.

Pſal. 77. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12.

4. Attribute to God the glory of his own grace, and this is the way to enjoy the comfort of our grace. Say with the Church. *Not unto us, O Lord not unto us but unto thy name give the glory.* It will be juſt with God to deny you the comfort of grace, if you deny him the glory of his grace. Want of comfort is Gods Phyſick to cure our ſoules with ſpirituall pride: and humble thankfulneſs for the leaſt grace, is the way to enjoy the comfort of all our graces.

Anſw. 4.

Pſal. 115, 1.

5. Spend more time in cheriſhing thy comforts then in queſtioning of them. It is the fault of ſome Chriſtians, to ſpend more time in fruitleſſe complaints of the want of comfort, then in faithfull endeavours after comfort in Gods way. There are thoſe who are more inquiſitive how they loſt their comforts, then carefull how to recover them; and ſo indeed they weaken their own hands, but

Anſ. 5.

but do ſtrengthen the hands of Satan.

A fourth generall propounded in the ſolution of this Caſe, was this: What may be the comfortable conſiderations which may be gathered from the truth delivered, *viz.* That ſtrong Chriſtians may bee but weak in comfort? Now the handling of this laſt, will be an application of the other three particulars, by way of conſolation to thoſe that may perhaps now have ſtrong grace, but weak comfort.

Conſolat. 1. The godly are never without the ground of comfort, though they may bee without the ſenſe of comfort. Though they may be without preſent feeling, yet they doe not want real cauſe of conſolation. They have an undoubted right to comfort, though not a cleare ſight of comfort. A child may have right to an inheritance, though he be not able to demonſtrate and prove his right. Perhaps a man cannot read his evidences for his land, and yet thoſe evidences give him a right to his lands: So it is with a childe of God, hee hath comfort ſowen, though perhaps hee cannot preſently reap it. *Light is ſowen for the righteous, and joy for the upright of heart.* As it was with *Hagar* in the wilderneſſe of *Beer-ſheba*, her water was ſpent in the bottle, and ſhee caſt her child away from her, becauſe ſhe could not endure to ſee him die: ſhe lift up her voice and wept, that ſhe and her child ſhould both miſerably periſh by thirſt, and yet there was a Well of water

water hard by her. but ſhe ſaw it not: ſo it is with many a poor ſoule, who are athirſt for comfort, and (as they think) ready to periſh, and yet there is a Well of water of life and comfort, faſt by, but they want the eie of faith to ſee it. And this is a great comfort, that a child of God, though he may want comfort, yet he hath right unto comfort, in that he hath truth of grace in him. Gen. 12. 16 17.

2. At that time when God withholds comfort from thee, yet he doth really love thee. Jeſus Chriſt doth ſometimes ſerve his children, as *Joſeph* ſerved his brethren. He ſpake roughly to them, and he put them in priſon, and yet *Joſeph* did dearly love his brethren, and his bowels did yern towards them. Thus Jeſus Chriſt, his reall love is the ſame to his children at all times, though the manifeſtation of it may not be alwaies alike; *Joſeph* knew his brethren, though his brethren did not know him. *The Lord knowes who are his*, though thoſe that are his perhaps do not know that they are ſo. Jeſus knew *Mary*, though ſhe did not know him. Ioh. 20. 15.

There may be as much mercy to us in withdrawing of comfort, as in the giving of comfort. God many times in wrath lets a man be filled with the ungrounded comfort of ſuppoſed grace. Oh (beloved) it is farre better to want comfort then grace. Many a man that hath no true grace, yet hath ſeeming comfort; but a child of God is often without comfort, that he may examine and exerciſe

exercise his grace, and so at last enjoy a welgrounded joy, and a well bottom'd consolation. Grace is the best foundation of spirituall consolation.

2 Tim. 2. 1.

Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Iesus.

Serm. XII. *At Lawrence Jury, London, April 20. 1651.*

I Have already handled four cases of conscience, concerning strength of grace, *viz.*

1. *Whether strong temptations may be consistent with strength of grace?*
2. *Whether strong corruptions may consist with the strength of grace?*
3. *Whether a man may be strong in grace, and yet want those strong affections which hee had at his first conversion?*
4. *Whether a man may have strength of grace, and yet want the comfort of his grace?*

I shall proceed now to a fifth Case of Conscience, *viz.*

Case 5. *Whether a man may be said to have strength of grace, who hath but weak gifts?*

In the opening of which case I shall thus proceed:

1. I will premise some propositions.
2. I shall positively resolve the Case.
3. And then give you some practicall inferences by way of Application.

I'll begin with the first, namely the Positions,

tions, and they are theſe foure following:

The firſt Poſition is this; That though all beleevers they have the ſame Spirit, yet God in his wiſdome thinks it fit they ſhall not have the ſame gifts. *There are* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit.* As it is with flowers, there is not the ſame ſmell but different ſmels to different flowers, and yet all their ſents have the ſame influence from above; and as it is with inſtruments of muſick, there are divers ſounds in the organ, but the ſame breath doth cauſe the ſeverall ſounds: So in the Church of God, though there is the ſame influence of the Spirit of God, yet not the ſame meaſure of gifts in each member of the Church. *Poſit.* 1. 1 Cor. 12.

The ſecond Poſition is this, that diverſity of gifts is not to be aſcribed to mans induſtry, diligence, or education; but to the free pleaſure and diſpenſation of God. It is true, much may be aſcribed to ſtudy, and induſtry, and diligence in a way of gifts, which was the ground of the Apoſtles exhortation, *Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, &c. and meditate on theſe things, give thy ſelfe wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.* The Apoſtle ſpeaks there of profiting in miniſteriall gifts: which gifts, diligence and ſtudy do much advantage and promote: yet though we were all equall in ſtudy and diligence, there would be a diverſity in our gifts, leſt men ſhould vaunt of their induſtry in acquiring gifts, and there- *Poſit.* 2. 1 Tim. 4. 23 Ver. 15.

by

by exclude Gods bounty In beſtowing them,
Pſal.127.1. *Pſal.*127.1. *Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain who build it.* (Saith *Hilderſam*) *Suppoſe that two men were to read the ſame books, and to ſtudy the ſame matter every day, yet the one may be a dunce, and a man of low gifts, and the other may have rare parts and excellent endowments; this is to ſhew who we are beholding to; that is God, whoſe diſpenſation of gifts are many, and variouſly beſtowed.* Hence it is the Apoſtle telleth us, *That all theſe gifts*
1 Cor.12. 11. *worketh that one and the ſelfe ſame Spirit, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will*; ſo that though one man differ from another in gifts, yet it is God that maketh him to differ.

*Poſit.*3. 3. The third Poſition is this, That a man may be excellent in one gift, and yet defective in other gifts, one man ſhall not have all; this is very obſervable by inſtances you have in Scripture. The firſt inſtance is between *Paul* and *Barnabas*; if you look unto *Paul*, his gift was the gift of utterance, and freedome of ſpeech, inſomuch, that at *Lyſtra*,
Acts 14.11 *Paul* was taken for *Mercury* the God of Eloquence, becauſe he was the chiefe Speaker; and though it is ſaid of *Paul*, that *he was rude of ſpeech*, that is, not as if it were ſo indeed, but in the opinion and conceit of the *Corinthians*, who being ſeduced by falſe teachers,
2 Cor.11.6 hearkened to their diſparagements of *Paul*.
Acts 4.36. *Paul* he was a moſt eloquent man, and had much of the gift of utterance, but now *Barnabas* did excell *Paul* in another gift, to com-

fort

fort those who were troubled in conscience; he was a *sonne of Consolation*, to comfort troubled consciences. So likewise in the case of *Peter* and the other Apostles; Divines gather from Christs commission to *Peter*, singling him out, when he said, *Peter, feed* my *Lambs*; *Peter, lovest thou me*? The reason that some Expositors give, why *Peter* was singled out, was this; because *Peter* had an excellent gift in preaching, and in feeding the Lambs of Christ, that is, weak beleevers. Moreover, it is said of *James* and *John*, that they were called *Sonnes of Thunder*, as having a more powerfull gift from God, to terrifie and awake a sinners conscience, then *Peter* and other Apostles had. So that though some of the Apostles had most excellent gifts, yet some of them excelled others in some one gift.

Acts 11. 24

Ioh. 21. 15.

Mar. 3. 17. *Boanerges.*

The fourth Position is, That there are Cases, wherein men may have great gifts, but weak grace. God is pleased sometimes to carry mens gifts very high, when their graces have not a proportionable elevation, and the reason is, because gifts are for the good of others, for the edification of the Church of God, and not for the good of a mans selfe only; *They were wanting in no gift, and had all knowledge*; and yet when he mentions their graces, he saith, *I could not speak to you as spirituall, but carnall*; They out-strip other Churches in gifts, yet they came short of other Churches in grace. Such was the Church of

Posit. 4.

1 Cor. 5. 7. compared with 1 Cor. 3. 1.

Laodicea

Rev.3.11. *Laodicea*, ſhe was rich in gifts, and poor in grace. Now there are foure caſes wherein men may have ſtrong gifts, and yet but little grace.

Caſe 1. 1. When mens notions are cleare and ſtrong, but mens experiences and affections but low and weak, to have more expreſſions then impreſſions; to be like the moon, that though from the waine it growes big, and increaſes to the full; yet it increaſes only in light, and not in heat: So, many men meerly increaſe in light of notions and ſpeculations, and not in heat of affection towards God, and the practicall part of Chriſtianity; and it is to bee feared that much of the Religion of theſe times is of this ſtamp, it is more in notion then motion, more in talking then walking, more in parts then grace

Caſe 2. 2. When thy gifts are not influentiall upon thy life. Look as it is in that diſeaſe of the Rickets, that children are liable too, they may grow big in the head, and yet decay in the lower parts: ſo there are ſome (as it hath been ſhown) who have the diſeaſe of the ſpirituall Rickets, they do grow big in the head, big in gifts, and yet decay in their vitals, decay in grace and the exerciſe of it.

Caſe 3. 3. When their gifts bid but tend to the promotion of diviſion in the Church, and pride in their own hearts. This was diſcovered in the Church of *Corinth*, they came

1 Cor.1.7. behind in no gift; but ſee what hee ſaith in

verſe

Verſe 11. *For it hath been declared unto me of you (my brethren) by them which are of the houſe of* Cloe, *that there are contentions among you.* And then in *ver.* 12. *Now this I ſay, that every one of you ſaith, I am of* Paul, *I of* Apollos, *I of* Cephas, *and I of Chriſt*; they were carnall as to grace, and walked as men, though they were high in gifts; and when gifts engender ſtrife in the Church, and pride in a mans own heart, and when they do elevate and puffe up the heart with vaine and high conceits, this is an argument they are but meer gifts. The *Corinthians* were in every thing inriched by God, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, ſo that they came behind in no gift, they had abundance of knowledge, but *knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth.*

Verſe 11.

Verſe 12.

1 Cor. 15. 7.

1 Cor. 8. 1.

4. When gifts are encreaſed meerly by vertue of continuall ſtudy and induſtry, when gifts proceed meerly from ſtrength of naturall parts, advantaged by education, ſtudy and diligence; if gifts doe meerly proceed from that fountaine, there may be much gifts, but little grace. The greateſt Scholars are not alwaies the beſt men, the reaſon is, becauſe their gifts are gotten by induſtry and diligence: their gifts may be high, when their graces are low.

Caſe 4.

The fifth Poſition, there are caſes wherein men may decay, and be weak in gifts, and yet may be ſaid to have ſtrength of grace.

Poſit. 5.

1. If it proceed meerly from a naturall,

not a ſinful defect. If weak gifts proceed from ſinfull defects it argues grace is but weak; as if it proceeds from negligence, from ſloth, from careleſneſſe to attend upon Ordinances, from idleneſſe in not reading, in not meditating, in not praying, not uſing holy conference, then grace decaies with gifts, theſe are ſinfull defects; but not if this proceeds meerly from naturall defects, as a man of a ſhallow capacity, of a ſlow ſpeech, of a bad memory, of a weakly body, that either through ſickneſſe or old age, the body is weakned, in that there are naturall decaies in the body; becauſe the putting forth of gifts depends upon the temperature and diſpoſition of the body. As it is with an inſtrument of muſick that is out of tune, it makes no melody though the inſtrument be good: So a body out of tune, hath not that uſe of, or putting out of gifts. As it is with an old Preacher, his gifts may decay when he is an old man, that he may not have ſuch freedome of ſpeech, ſuch clearneſſe of judgement, ſuch ſtrength of memory; as the body decaies, the gift of elocution will decay, and his memory may decay, that he may not be ſo ready in delivering the Word; but yet hee may have as great ability in preaching, yea more experience, more ſolid judgement, and more clear underſtanding in the myſteries of the Goſpell, then a young man can have: ſo it is with Chriſtians, their gifts may decay, as the temper of the body decaies; as it is with a

Muſician,

Muſician, when he is a young man, his joints being more plyable, plaies more nimbly and melodiouſly upon an inſtrument of muſick, but when he comes to be an old man, he cannot play ſo nimbly and melodiouſly, his joints being ſtiffe; but yet he hath more skill then a young man hath. When this doth not proceed from ſinfull defects, but from naturall defects, then may a mans grace be ſtrong, though his gifts and parts be weak.

2. If you want thoſe externall advantages to further and promote the growth of gifts; as for example, A Chriſtian that followes an ordinary Trade, which carries a water tankard on his ſhoulder, he may attain more brokenneſſe of heart, more humility and ſelfe-denyall, more experience of the goodneſſe of God toward his ſoule, and of the method of God, then he who perhaps is in ſome great, honourable, and eminent imploiment: But that Chriſtian who hath this mean imployment, and ſuch poor education, ſhall not attain thoſe gifts, that others have attained who have greater advantages. As it is with a Scholar that hath been divers years at the Univerſity, he hath thoſe externall advantages, as education and literature, that his gifts and parts may be much increaſed; when perhaps a poor man that followes the plough, may attain to more grace, and more acquaintance with the waies of God. Now if ſuch a man have not ſo many gifts as others, it is not his ſinne: God doth not require more then he gives. *Caſe 2.*

Caſe 3. 3. If you have not a calling to uſe or put forth the exerciſe of your gifts, your gifts may decay, though grace do not decay. Gifts are increaſed by exerciſe, the leſſe they are exerciſed, the more they decay: if thou haſt not an opportunity to exerciſe thy gifts as in former times, to pray in company, to uſe holy conference, as in former times thou hadſt; in ſuch a caſe a Chriſtian who is ſtrong in grace may grow weaker in gifts.

Caſe 4. 4. If what you want in gifts you make up in humility. Strength of grace is not to be meaſured by notions and ſpeculations in the head, but by humility in the heart; therefore if thy gifts be weak, if thy humility be great, thou haſt ſtrength of grace: the leſſe bloſſomes there are on the branches, the leſſe ſap there is in the root. He that hath great parts, and is proud of them, it is much to be feared, hath leſſe grace then that man who hath but few gifts and low parts, but in the ſenſe of his own weakneſs hath low and ſelf-denying thoughts of himſelfe.

Caſe 5. 5. Laſtly, If what you want in gifts you make up in your practice, by a holy and conſcionable walking. That Martyr that ſaid, *I cannot diſpute, but I can burn for the truth*, had more grace then thoſe that could diſpute but not burn.

Uſe 1. The application of this Caſe is onely for Caution: And I ſhall give you a threefold Caution.

1. Cau-

1. Caution. Take heed ye be not proud of the greateſt meaſure of gifts you have: there is nothing in the world that a man is ſo apt to be proud of as his gifts; a man is not ſo apt to be proud of grace, becauſe he hath a principle to check his pride, but he is apt to be proud of his gifts; a man is not ſo apt to be proud of outward endowments, as clothing, riches, and the like, as he is apt to be proud of his gifts. Expoſitors that do handle the Propheſie of *Ezekiel*, they ſay that *Ezekiel* is called ninety three times (*Thou ſonne of man*) in that Propheſie; now there is no other Prophet that is mentioned in all the Bible, but only one, which is called *The ſon of man*, and that is *Daniel*. Now Expoſitors give this reaſon why he is called by this title, becauſe he was a Prophet of the greateſt gifts, and had the moſt glorious viſions of all the other Prophets. Compare this Prophecy with *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, *Hoſea*, or all the reſt, yet *Ezekiels* propheſie is a more dark, myſterious, profound book. Now *Ezekiel* being a Prophet of the greateſt gifts; God takes this care to keep his heart low, *Thou ſon of man*, *Thou ſon of man*, and all is to keep his heart low; which doth teach us thus much, that thoſe that have great gifts, they ought to ſpend a great deal of time to keep their hearts humble and low, becauſe there is a flatuous humour in our nature, whereby we are apt to to ſwel and be puft up in the ſenſe of our own gifts. Dan. 8. 7.

2. Caution. Prize a little grace before a great measure of gifts; ye will price a pearle though no bigger then a pea, more then a great heap of stones. There is great reason why wee should prize a little grace before much gifts.

Reason. 1. 1. Grace will last when gifts are withering. Blazing Comets will fall, when the Star never fals; a falling Star is no Star, but only a Comet: So the hypocrites may have a great blaze of their gifts, and yet may fall like Comets that hover in the aire. Grace is like a Star that keeps fixed in its orbe; there is a great deal of difference betwixt a painted face and a naturall complexion, the painted face will not alwaies last, but naturall complexion that wil alwaies remain. Gifts are but paint, the ornament of the creature, but true grace which is as the naturall complexion, that will remaine.

Reason 2. 2. Prize a little grace before much gifts, because gifts will leave thee short of heaven. Christ told the learned Scribe, that he was *not far from the Kingdome of heaven*; but alas, for all his gifts and learning, hee fell short of heaven. *Many will say to me* (said Christ) *in*

Mat. 7. 22. *that day, Lord, Lord, have not we propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wondrous workes?* You see it is observable, these men might pretend to high and great gifts, and yet they to whom God opened the secrets of his Kingdome, against them he shut the gates of heaven. A man

man may be a Preacher, and have the ſecrets of heaven opened to him, and yet have the gates of heaven ſhut againſt him. A man may attain the gift in Chriſts name to caſt out devils, a great and a miraculous gift, and yet thoſe men that caſt out devils, were themſelves caſt to devils. *We have done many wondrous works*; they that did wonders, were made a wonder: they that had ſo much gifts came ſhort of heaven; yea, they *who may preach to others, may themſelves be caſt-awaies.*

3. Doe not miſtake ſtrength of gifts to be ſtrength of grace. Parents would not judge their children ſtrong, when their heads and breſts are big, and their feet but feeble; ſo you may grow big in your heads, in notions and ſpeculations, in gifts, and yet feeble in practice of grace. Now that you may not miſtake your ſelves, and may not be deceived; I'll ſhew you how you may know the difference betwixt thoſe that have ſtrong gifts, and thoſe that have ſtrong grace. In the generall take this: As Art reſembles nature, ſo gifts reſemble grace. Now there are foure differences. 3 *Caution.*

1. As grace ſtrengthens, corruption weakens. It is with grace and luſts, as it was with the houſe of *Saul* and the houſe of *David*. *As Davids houſe grew ſtronger and ſtronger, ſo* Sauls *houſe grew weaker and weaker.* As the Arke was ſet up, *Dagon* was throwne downe; the *Dagon* of corruption will be thrown down before the Ark of grace, and 1 *Difference.*

the Arke of the covenant, but gifts may ſtrengthen, and yet corruptions never the weaker. Indeed gifts diſcover corruption, but we are not able to mortifie and ſubdue it. Gifts diſcover many corruptions, but mortifie none. Gifts take a cognizance of many a ſinne, but never put a period to any. Men that have gifts are reſembled to the moon, and men that have grace are reſembled to the Sun; the moon hath an influence upon the water to make that move, to ebb and flow: the Moon ſheds light upon all creatures, but no heat, to make thoſe creatures grow and ſpring: So a man of gifts may have light, but no heat to thoſe gifts to make grace to grow, and make ſinne to fade and wither. Gracious men are like the Sunne, that doth not only give life but heat, by the influence thereof things ſpring and grow out of the earth; the great parts of a gifted man, often occaſionally ſtrengthen his corruptions, but do not weaken them. *Auguſtine* could ſay, *Ignorant and illiterate men, they take heaven; when others with all their Scholarſhip go to hell.*

Surgunt indocti & rapiunt cœlum, & nos cum doctrina noſtra perimus; Aug.

2. Where there is ſtrength of grace, there the heart is more humbled under the meaſures of grace received; the ſtronger the graces are, the more the heart is humbled. But ſtrength of parts in moſt men, makes them proud and lofty. Empty veſſels make the greateſt noiſe, and ſo do ſhallow ſtreams: So men that have great gifes are often empty of grace, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. They are puft up with pride

2 Difference.

pride, who have more gifts then grace, and by the humility of the ſoule you may know whether that ſoule be ſtronger in grace, then in gifts.

3. He looks more after the ſupply of the grace he wants, then in a way of contentment in the grace he hath. This argued *Paul* had much grace, when he thus ſpeaks, *I doe ſtrive after more and more grace, if by any meanes I might attain the reſurrection of the dead:* that is, I doe labour after more perfection of grace, which thoſe ſhall have that are raiſed from the dead, and exalted in heaven: but now a man that hath gifts, is more apt to look what he hath, then what he wanteth. Men of gifts are more apt to look upon their attainments, then their imperfections, they look upon their gifts in a multiplying glaſſe, more then they are; and upon their failings in an extenuating glaſſe, leſſe then they are.

3 *Difference.*

Phil. 3. 13. expounded

Munera non vulnera oſtendit.

4. The more grace any one hath, the more communicative he is, that others may be partakers of the ſame grace. When the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the duties of husbands and wives, he would have them further one another in the way to heaven, *conſidering they are heires together of the grace of God.* Chriſt alſo ſpeaks to *Peter, When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.* By Converſion is not meant Gods firſt act in bringing *Peters* ſoule home to Chriſt, but it is meant by an eſtabliſhing work of grace, as if Chriſt ſhould have ſaid, *Peter*, now thy grace is weak, and it will be

4 *Difference.*

1 Pet. 3. 7.

Luke 22. 32, 33.

be weaker by thy fall, but when thou art recovered from thy fall, and denyall of thy maſter, then ſtrengthen thy brethren, labour to ſtrengthen the graces of other men, when thy graces are ſtrong, and thy ſtrength recovered; and this is a very good evidence that thou haſt not only grace, but ſtrength of grace thy ſelfe, when thou art carefull to ſtrengthen others: but ſuch as have gifts only, with little or no grace, they are loath to communicate their gifts unto others, they would willingly monopolize their gifts, and grudge to impart them to others, they would not have other men have the like gifts with themſelves, leſt their glory ſhould be darkned. They are not of *Iohn Baptiſts* minde, who cared not though he decreaſed, ſo as Chriſt encreaſed, but rather they are like to one *Aſpendius*, a skilfull Muſician, who would never play on his inſtrument before any of his profeſſion, leſt they ſhould learn his skill. This is a notable diſcovery whether thou haſt ſtrong grace, or ſtrong gifts only, which thou maieſt know by thy willingneſſe and readineſſe to communicate unto others, what God hath imparted unto thee.

1 Tim.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

My ſon, Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

Serm. XIII *At Lawrence Jury, London,* April 20, 1651.

YOU have heard the firſt Doctrine opened, *viz. That beleevers are not to be ſatisfied in weak meaſures of grace already received but ought to endevor to attain greater ſtrength of grace.* I ſhall now proceed to the improvement of this point by making ſome application of it; and I ſhall direct the uſe to two ſorts of Chriſtians.

1. To ſuch as are weak in the faith.

2. To ſuch as are ſtrong and grown Chriſtians.

1. With weak beleevers I would leave theſe directions and conſolations following.

Uſe 1. 1. It is your wiſdome to look more after the truth of your grace, then after the meaſure of it. It is an errour in many Chriſtians, eſpecially young Converts, that they bring their graces rather to the ballance then to the touchſtone, they weigh them when they ſhould try them. *Peter* being asked by Chriſt, *Simon, loveſt thou me more then theſe?* he anſwers not about the meaſure of his love, but about the truth of his love, *Lord, I love thee, and thou knoweſt that I love thee.* It is not the quantity or meaſure, but the nature and eſ-

Iohn 21. 15

ſence

ſence of grace, which is mainly conſiderable. If thou haſt grace in truth and reality, it will encreaſe; be ſure thy grace be right, and as the light it ſhineth more and more to the perfect day; and as the nature of the leaven is, that it doth ſpread through the whole lump, ſo is grace, it is of a ſpreading and increaſing nature; and therefore be careſull thy grace for nature and for eſſence be true, and for the meaſure of it, it will then increaſe.

2. In finding out the truth of grace, we muſt not meaſure it ſo much by actions of affections and holy diſpoſitions of the heart: the bent, frame, & tendencies of the heart, are the beſt diſcoverers of grace in the heart. When a Chriſtian caſts up all the ſtock of grace he hath, he will find that it doth conſiſt more in deſires then endeavours, and more in endeavours and attempts to perform holy duties, then in performance it ſelfe. Naturall life is more diſcernable by the heat, then by the colour: a Painter may counterfeit the one, but not the other. When the Lord Jeſus is deſcribing the beauty of his Spouſe, he doth not ſay, How faire are thy looks? but, *How faire is thy love?* Cant. 4. 10.

3. Be not diſcouraged, though men of glorious gifts fall away: for the pooreſt Chriſtian that hath but the ſmalleſt meaſure of grace ſhall never fall away. The gifts of a Formaliſt may quickly wither, for they have their root in nature: but the graces of a true Chriſtian ſhal never periſh, becauſe they have their root in

in Christ. *A Christians life is hid with Christ*; hid in him as in a root, as in the fountaine of life. A painted face may soon fade, so doth not a true and naturall complexion; the varnish of a formall hypocrite is soon wash't out, but when true grace like a colour in graine, hath grown habituall in the soule, it is not removable: sooner will the sunne discard its own beames, then Christ will desert or destroy the least measure of true grace, which is a beam from that *Sun of righteousnesse*. Col. 3. 3.

4. Improve your little grace well; this is the way to have more. *To him that hath shall it be given*, i.e. more shall given. God never gave any man a talent to hide it in a napkin. The least measure of grace is accountable for. Grace is improved, Luk. 19. 1.

1. When we ascribe all the glory of grace unto God; as he said right, *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds*. Thy pound, and not my pains; We should doe all to the praise of the glory of Gods grace. If we give God the glory of his grace, he will give us the comfort of our grace, and the increase of it. Luk. 19. 10.

2. When for the edification and building up of others in their most holy faith: to doe good to others, is the best way to get more good our selves. The more the well is drawne, the more water comes, and the better the water is; so the more thy grace is exercised, the more grace thou wilt have, and the sweeter will the comfort be of thy grace.

5. To weak Christians. Do not deny the truth

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truth of grace in your ſoules, becauſe you cannot finde the ſtrength of grace in your ſouls. A poor weak man in a Conſumption cannot lift up ſuch a weight, nor can he bear ſuch a burden as a man in ſtrength and health can do, yet he hath life as well as the ſtrongeſt man in the world. It may be *day* when it is not *noon*, thou maieſt in reſpect of ſpirituall eſtate, have the ſtrength of a *child*, though not the ſtrength of a *man*. It is not only an act of *unthankefulneſſe* to God, but alſo of *uncharitableneſſe* to a mans own ſoule, to conclude a nullity of grace from the weakneſſe of it.

6. Look not ſo much on your ſins, but look upon your grace alſo, though weak grace. Weak Chriſtians look more on their ſinnes then on their graces, yet God looks on their graces, and overlooks their ſinnes and infirmities: Saith the Holy Ghoſt, *Ye have heard of the patience of Iob.* He might alſo have ſaid, *Ye have heard of the impatiency of Iob*; but God reckons of his people, not by what is bad in them, but by what is good in them. Mention is made of *Rahabs* entertainment of the ſpies, but no mention is made that ſhe told the lie when ſhe did ſo; that which was well done was mentioned to her praiſe, and what was amiſſe is buried in ſilence, or at leaſt is not recorded againſt her and charged upon her. He that drew the picture of *Alexander* with his ſcarre on his face, drew him with his finger on his ſcarre. God laies the

Iam. 5. 13.

the finger of mercy upon the ſcars of our ſins. Oh it is good ſerving ſuch a Maſter, who is ready to reward the good we do, and is ready to forgive and paſſe by what is amiſſe; and therefore thou that haſt but a little grace, yet remember God will have his eye on that little grace. *He wil not quench the ſmoaking flax, nor breake the bruiſed reed.* Mar.12.20

7. Learn this for thy comfort, that though thou haſt but a little grace, yet that little grace ſhall not bee extinguiſhed by thy ſtrong corruption, but at laſt it ſhall over-maſter your corruptions. What was ſaid of *Eſau* and *Jacob*, *the one ſhall be ſtronger then the other, and the elder ſhall ſerve the younger*, and ſo it came afterwards to paſſe in the time of *Jehoſaphat*, when there was no King in *Edom*; That may be fitly applyed to the affaires of the ſoule: the elder ſhall ſerve the younger; corruption in the ſoule is elder then grace in the ſoule, and corruption is ſo oppoſite to grace, that it labours for the extinction of grace: but this ſparke ſhall live in the midſt of the ſea of corruption, till at laſt that great deep ſhall be made dry; and the houſe of *David* ſhall at laſt quite put down the houſe of *Saul*: the Name of the Lord will perform this, and therefore thou that art but a weak Chriſtian, learn to ſtay thy ſelfe on the Name of the Lord, till judgement be brought forth into victory. Gen.25.23 1 Ki.22.47.

2. *Uſe* of this doctrine is unto ſtrong beleevers, ſuch as have attained unto a higher form

form of grace in the Schoole of Chriſt.

2. Though you are ſtrong in grace, yet remember it is not the grace of God in you, but the free grace of God towards you, by which you are juſtified. It is not our inherent righteouſneſſe, but the imputed righteouſneſſe of Jeſus Chriſt that is our Juſtification. Oh conſider, you that have moſt grace, what would become of you, were it not for free grace? Free grace is the ſureſt and only refuge for a ſoule to flie unto. God can finde matter of condemnation againſt you not only for your worſt ſinnes, but your beſt duties. The beſt Chriſtian hath no reaſon to venture his ſoule on the beſt thought that ever he conceived, nor on the moſt holy duty that ever he performed, nor on the higheſt grace that ever he exerciſed. A famous inſtance hereof we have in *Nehemiah*, who had much grace, and did much for God, his people, his houſe, his cauſe, yet prayes after all this, *Spare me according to the greatneſſe of thy mercy.* Intimating, that God might finde therein matter enough to ruine him, if God did not ſpare him for his mercies ſake. So *Paul* in the diſcharge of his Miniſtery, proceeded with ſo much uprightneſſe, that he ſpeaks thus of himſelfe, *I know nothing by my ſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified.* He knew that all the grace and excellency, and uprightneſſe in him, would not make him righteous in the ſight of God. We read of *Jehoſaphat*, that when he had muſtered up all

Neh. 1. 13. 22.

1 Cor. 4. 4.

2 Chro. 11. 19.

all his ſtrength, which was very great, for he had *eleven hundred thouſand men in his militia*, yet he goes to God, and prayes, *Lord, we have no might or power againſt theſe multitudes, and we know not what to doe, only our eyes are up to thee*: So when a Chriſtian hath muſter'd up all the ſtrength of his grace, and conſiders the great power of his corruptions which do let themſelves againſt him, he had beſt go to God and ſay, Lord, I have no power againſt theſe many and great corruptions, but my eyes are to thy grace, that thou mayſt help me. As in a paire of Compaſſes, one foot is fixed in the Center whileſt the other turns about the circumference: ſo muſt the ſoul fix and ſtay it ſelf on Chriſt, whilſt it is exerciſed about holy duties. Though Chriſt (as I formerly mentioned,) commended many parts of the Spouſe, yet not her hands; to teach us, that all the Spouſe could do, could not make her amiable in the eyes of Chriſt, nor the Spouſes working for Chriſt, but Chriſts work in the Spouſe made her beautiful. Oh it is very hard through ſtrength of grace to abound in the work of the Lord, and yet keep the heart humble: And therefore,

1 Chro. 11. 19. 2 Chro. 10. 12.

Cant. 4 1: to 8.

2. Conſider, they that have moſt grace, yet have great cauſe to be humbled; and that in many reſpects.

1. Thou haſt not ſo much grace and perfection as once thou hadſt: Once man was beautified and beſpangled with many glori-

ous perfections before the fall, it might have been ſaid of man, that he *was perfect as his heavenly Father was perfect*; for God made man upright that is, perfect, nothing was wanting then to make man both an happy and holy creature; but alas, the image of God in us is now obliterated and defaced.

Phil.3.12, 13.

2. He that hath much grace, hath not ſo much as he ſhall have in heaven. *Not that I am perfect already, but I forget thoſe things that are behind, and I preſſe forward unto thoſe things that are before: yea, I preſſe* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *toward the mark of the price of the High Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* We read under the law of ſeverall things that were to be a cubit and halfe high and broad; it being an imperfect meaſure, it was to note, that no man in this life hath an exactneſſe and perfection, the uttermoſt that is attainable by us in this life, is but imperfect. In this life there is a *plus ultra*, ſomething ſtil to be attained in religion. but in heaven men ſhall be *perfect*. We ſhal in heaven *be like to Jeſus Chriſt*, whom though we now ſee but darkly and in a glaſs, then we ſhal ſee him as he is.

Ex.25.10.

The errour of the Familiſtical Perfectiſts very pernicious, Heb.12 23. 1 Ioh.3.2.

3. They that have much grace, yet ſhould be humbled, for there are thoſe that have more grace then you, and yet have had leſſe time and fewer advantages then you have; there are thoſe that have gone before you much for ſtrength of grace, and yet have come behind you for meanes of grace: there are thoſe who were the laſt, and are firſt, and before you.

Mat.20. 16.

4. Be

4. Be humbled under much grace; for ye have not ſo much grace as you ſhould have had, conſidering the meanes of grace you have lived under. How many yeares have you been in the Schoole of Chriſt, and yet what little proportionable progreſſe have you made in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt? we may all bluſh to think what dunces wee have been in the School of Chriſt. The trees of the garden ſhould beare more fruit then the trees of the forreſt: the *Fig-tree* therefore which was unfruitful, was the more intolerable, becauſe it is in the garden, in the vineyard. What the Apoſtle complains of the Hebrews, we our ſelves may juſtly take up the complaint againſt our ſelves, that *for the time we ought to have been teachers, and yet have need that one teach us again what are the firſt principles of the Oracles of God, and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat.* Luk. 14. 6, 7. Heb. 5. 12.

5. They that have much grace, and are ſtrong in grace, yet have cauſe to be humble, becauſe its likely they had more grace and did more good heretofore then now; and who is there almoſt that is not decayed, that hath not in ſome degree or other *left their firſt love*? have you not had (I ſpeake to grown and experienced Chriſtians) more love and zeale to God, more hatred of ſin, more griefe for ſinne, more feare of offending God then now you have? are there not many that have and doe expreſſe Rev. 2. 5.

leſſe deſire after duty, leſſe fervency, leſſe frequency, leſſe delight in holy duties then formerly? Alas! how many through pride and ſpirituall improvidence, through neglect of Ordinances, and worldly mindedneſſe have much abated in their ſpiritual eſtate!

6. Be humbled, that though you be ſtrong in grace, yet you have many corruptions in you more ſtrong then many graces. More are our vain thoughts then our meditations, and more are the things we are ignorant of, then the things we know. Corruption is ſtrong enough to keep grace low, but in the beſt, grace is not ſtrong enough to bring corruption under. *When we would do good, evil is preſent and powerfull with us*, to hinder us from doing of good; but when we are doing of evil, good is not preſent to hinder us from that evil: we are more in ſinning then in obeying. Our corruptions are like *Goliah*, our grace as *David*. We exerciſe more kind of ſins then graces: as in a field there are more briars and thornes then uſefull trees, and in a garden more unprofitable weeds then roſes and lilies; ſo in the ſoules of the beſt there are whole ſwarms of vaine, earthly, and ſinfull thoughts, when they are but very few holy and heavenly thoughts.

Quantum eſt quod neſcimus

Rom. 7. 31.

7. Another argument why ſtrong Chriſtians ſhould be humble, is this, that though they may have grace, yet they are ſubject to fall into that ſin, which is moſt contrary to that grace wherein they are moſt eminent.

Abraham

Abraham was moſt eminent for faith; he is ſaid *to be ſtrong in faith*, he is called *the father of the faithfull. They which be of faith are bleſſed with faithfull* Abraham: and yet for all this *Abraham* fell into diſtruſt of Gods providence and power, when he ſpake untruly, and *denied his wife*. So *Job* was renowned for his patience, *You have heard of the patience of Iob* (ſaith St *Iames*;) and yet we read in the ſtory of *Iobs* trials, that his impenitency did break out in many raſh ſpeeches and wiſhes. So *Moſes* was eminently meek, it was ſaid of him, *The man Moſes was very meeke, above all the men which were upon the face of earth.* And yet it is ſaid of him, *that his ſpirit was provoked, ſo that he ſpake unadviſedly with his lips:* and you ſhall finde meek *Moſes* thus expoſtulating with God himſelfe, *I am not able to bear all the people alone, becauſe it is too heavy for me, and if thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee out of hand, and if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me not ſee my wretchedneſſe.*

Rom. 4. 20.
Gal. 3. 9.
Gen. 20. 2.
Iam. 5 11.
Iob 6. 9.
Num. 12. 2.
Pſal. 106. 33.
Num. 11. 14, 15.

8. This further conſideration may alſo humble us, that in the higheſt and greateſt exerciſe of grace there is much mixture of ſinne. We may obſerve, that even thoſe good actions, for which many of the people of God are recorded in Scripture, are yet blemiſht with ſome notable defect. *Rahabs* faith in entertaining the ſpies, was blemiſh'd with this failing, in telling a lie concerning them. It was alſo good the Midwives did

when they refused to obey that bloody decree of the King of *Egypt*, and would not kill the male-children of the Hebrewes; and yet they miscarried as some observe in their answer to the King, when they made their excuse. We are apt to mingle sin with the best action we do, and so apt to plough with an Oxe and an Asse; and our corruptions are apt to discover themselves, even while we are upon the exercise of our grace.

Exod. 1. 17, 19.

3. Let the strong labour to be more strong, that so they may be *strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulnesse.* And therefore it is that the Apostle prayes for the *Romans*, *that they may be filled by the God of hope, with all joy and peace in beleeving, that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost*; and yet in the next verse he told them, *I my self am perswaded of you (my Brethren) that ye are full of goodnesse, and that ye are filled with all knowledge.* And as he prayes for the *Romans*, upon the same termes he presseth the *Thessalonians*, of whom he thus speakes. *Now as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are taught of God to love one another, and indeed you do it towards all the Brethren which are in all* Macedonia: *but we beseech you, Brethen that ye increase more and more. The righteous (saith Job) shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*

Col. 1. 11.

Rom. 15. 13, 14.

1 Thes. 4. 9, 10.

Iob 17. 9.

To

To quicken you here unto conſider,

1. *The more grace we have on Earth, the more glory we ſhall have in Heaven.* As God doth unequally diſpence his gifts in this life, ſo accordingly he crownes. There are degrees of torments in Hell, the hypocriticall Scribes and Phariſees, *who devoured widdows houſes, and for a pretence made long prayers*, are doomed by Chriſt himſelfe to receive *greater damnation*: and that ſervant who *knew his Lords will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according unto his wil, ſhal be beaten with many ſtripes.* Now if there are different degrees of torments in hell, then ſurely there are different degrees of glory in Heaven, and thoſe according to different degrees of grace here on earth.

Sicut Deus ſua dona in hac vita inæqualiter communicat ſic coronat. Bucha.

Mat. 23. 14.

2. It is of the nature of grace to grow and increaſe; and therefore if thou haſt grace either in truth of it, or in ſtrength of it, it will certainly grow. Grace in Scripture is compared to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, the leaſt of ſeeds, which afterwards ſprours and ſprings ſo, as that it becomes the largeſt of plants. In the ſame chaper grace is compared unto leaven, which *being put into the heap of meale, leaveneth the whole*: ſo grace (as I touched before) in the heart, is of a ſpreading nature, and will diffuſe it ſelfe into all the parts, powers, and faculties of ſoule and body. Chriſtians are therefore compared to the branches of a Vine, which of all trees growes moſt, and ſprings forth moſt fruit. A

Luk. 12. 47.

Mat 13 31 32. 33.

Ioh. 15. 1.

Picture doth not grow, but a living child wil grow.

3. Such as are ſtrong Chriſtians ſhould yet grow more and more, becauſe in this world there is no ſtint and meaſure ſet for ſpirituall growth: the *maximum quod ſic* of a Chriſtian is this, he muſt grow in grace til his head reach up to heaven, till grace be perfected in glory.

4. Shall worldings ſet no bounds to their deſires after wealth and land, and yet wilt thou take up with poor meaſures of grace for Religion? The ordinary anſwer of ignorant people is, What? muſt we be wiſer then our forefathers? and yet thoſe people would be richer then their forefathers were, and thoſe that have great wealth left them by their forefathers, yet are not ſatisfied with it unleſſe they increaſe their eſtate: let this ſhame that ſlothfulneſſe and ſupine negligence of many, who content themſelves with meaſures of grace.

Si dixiſti ſufficit, periiſti.

5. And laſtly, conſider, thoſe who were eminent for grace, in what eſteeme were they in the Church of God, and with what honourable mention are they recorded in the Word of God; ſuch are remembred to be of note in the Church of God. See what *Eulogium* the Holy Ghoſt gives *Job, that there was none like him in the earth.* God lovs thoſe that are ſingularly and excellently good; an ordinary pitch doth not ſo pleaſe him. *What do ye more then others? Solomon* was ſo

Rom. 16.7. ἐπίσημοι.
Iob. 1.8;
Mat. 5.47.

so renowned for wisedome, that it is said, *That amongst many Nations there was no King like him*, that is, for wisdome. So *Hezekiah* was eminent for trusting in God, who feared not to break in pieces the brazen serpent but trusted in God; *none like him of all the Kings of Judah*. And so eminent was the zeale of good *Iosiah* after a thorough reformation, that he is also crowned with this commendation, *And like him was there no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might*. By all which instances it is clear, of what honourable esteeme have the eminent particular graces of Gods servants been in the sight of the Lord.

τὶ περισσοὸν ποιοῖτε Nehem 13. 26.

2 King. 18. 4, 5.

2 King. 23. 25.

2 Tim. 2. 1.

My son, Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Iesus.

Sermon XIII. At *Lawrence Iury London.* April 20. 1651.

HAving in the last foregoing Sermons, treated of grace in its strength and growth, I am come to speak to this additional clause to the Text, viz. *That is in Christ Jesus*: which passage is here inserted by the Apostle, That he might let *Timothy* know to whom he was beholding for all the grace hee had received, even to Jesus Christ. In the tenth verse he speaks of *salvation that is in* Christ

Christ Jesus; and here of grace that is in Christ Jesus: to note,

1. That Jesus Christ is the fountaine and foundation, both of grace and glory. Jesus Christ gives *grace*, and Jesus Christ gives also *salvation with eternall glory*, Ver. 10.

2. That those who receive grace from Christ Jesus, shall also receive salvation by him, for there is an inseparable union between grace and glory.

The grace of God that is in Christ Jesus. Grace may be said to be in Christ.

Ioh. 1.14. Ioh 3.34. Col. 1.19. 1. As subject recipient, and so Christ is said to be *full of grace and truth*; *he had the Spirit without measure*, *it pleased the Father that in him all fulnesse should dwel.*

Iohn. 1.16. 2. In *Christ Jesus*, as a fountain redundant, over-flowing and ever-flowing to his people, *for of his fulnes we receive grace for grace.*

Againe, when it is said that grace is in Christ Jesus, we must consider Christ,

1. As God co-essential with the Father, and he is the Author and giver of grace, and of every good and perfect gift.

2 Consider him as Mediatour *God-man* and so he is the purchaser and procurer of grace, and of the blessings of the New Covenant, for *the blessing of Abraham cometh unto the gentiles* ἐν τῷ χριστῷ *through Christ Jesus.* So that by this phrase, *In Christ Jesus* there are three things implyed:

Gal. 3.14. ἐν τῷ χριστῷ. through Christ. Heb. 12. 1. That Jesus Christ is the Author and Giver of grace; he onely is the *Author and Finisher*

Finiſher of faith, and every grace in his people.

2. That Chriſt is the purchaſe of grace, ſo that all the grace that is beſtowed upon us by God, it is through Chriſt, and for his ſake. Grace is from Chriſt as a fountaine, and by Chriſt as a Conduit.

3. That Chriſt is the preſerver of grace, all the grace that is in us is *in Chriſt Jeſus*, hee keeps all our graces for us: As the beams of the Sun may be ſaid to be the Sun, becauſe they are preſerved by their union with the Sun. *Our life is hid with Chriſt in God*, hid as the life of a tree is hid in the root, and the being of a ſtream is hid in the fountain. And herein is the comfort of beleevers, that their condition is more ſtable, and immutable and ſafe, then ever *Adam* was in innocency; for he had all perfection of a creature, but they were in his own keeping; but now all the grace that is in a beleever is in Chriſt Jeſus, by whom, and in whom grace is ſafely preſerved, ſo as it ſhall never periſh. Col. 3. 3.

The point of doctrine I obſerve from theſe words is this: Doct.

That all thoſe meaſures of grace, whereof beleevers are partakers, they receive them in and from Ieſus Chriſt.

In the handling of which point I wil thus proceed:

1. Shew you the truth of it.

2. Give you the reaſons and grounds of it.

Now

Now to prove that all grace is received in and through Christ.

1. I will shew the truth of this by many resemblances, at which Christ is compared in the Scripture.

2. By many types of Christ in the Old Testament.

3. By many expresse testimonies in the New testament concerning this truth.

1. There are many resemblances in Scripture which do illustrate this, that all grace is from Christ Jesus.

Isa.17.10. 1. He is compared to a root. *He is called the root of* Jesse, not onely because he came of the stock of *David*, but that he gives grace to Jew and Gentile that do beleeve: for *to him shall the Gentiles seek*, as it followes in the next words. Now that the Prophet there speaks of Christ, is plain by the Apostles expresse application of that propheſie unto Christ, calling him the *root of* Jesse, *in whom the Gentiles should trust*. And Christ speakes of himselfe *I am the Vine. As the branch cannot beare fruit of it selfe except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me*; the life, sap, nourishment, growth and fruitfulnes of a branch is altogether from the root, with which the branches have union and communion.

Rom.15.2

Iohn 15.1.

Col.1.18. 2. Christ is called the head of his people; *He is the head of the body of the Church*. Now as sense and motion is derived from the head to the members of the body; so also is

grace

grace derived from Jeſus Chriſt to every true believer, every living member of his body.

3 Chriſt is called the *Sun of Righteouſneſſe.* Mal. 4 2. becauſe as heat and light are communicated by the Sun to things here below, ſo there is a ſweet influence of grace from Chriſt upon believers. As by vertue of the Sunnes influence the vegetable and ſenſible creatures live, move and grow; ſo alſo the life and growth of grace in the ſoule is from that divine influence which Jeſus Chriſt doth ſhed upon believers. *Niſi deſuper.*

4. Chriſt is compared to a fountaine, *even a fountaine opened to the houſe of* David, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *for ſin and for uncleanneſſe.* So that as water doth ſtreame forth in the river from the fountaine, ſo grace flowes down from Jeſus Chriſt upon believers, who is a fountaine, where al fulneſſe of grace for ever dwels, and from whence all grace is drawn and derived; and this is the firſt proof. Zech. 13. 1.

2. This truth may be demonſtrated by the many types of Chriſt in the old Teſtament which did ſhadow out unto us this, that all grace is from Jeſus Chriſt. I ſhall mention ſome.

1. *Aaron* the High Prieſt was to lay his *hands on the People, and to bleſſe them.* And herein he was a type of Chriſt our great and heavenly High Prieſt, through whom wee are bleſſed with grace. *God having bleſſed us with all ſpirituall bleſſings in heavenly places* Lev. 9. 22. Eph. 1. 3. Act. 3. 26.

ces in Christ. *Jesus Christ is sent by God to blesse his people, and to turn every one of them from their iniquities.* And therefore it is recorded by St. *Luke*, that a little before the Ascension of our blessed Saviour, *he laies his hands upon his disciples, and blessed them*, and so he doth still blesse all true beleevers with the spirituall blessing of grace.

Luk.24. 50

2. Another type of Christ was *Ioseph*, who in many things was a type of Christ. *Ioseph* was the *best beloved of his fathers children*; so was Jesus Christ, *the Son of his Fathers love:* Joseph *was hated of his brethren, and sold for twenty pieces of silver*; so was Jesus Christ, *he came unto his own, and his own received him not*, he was rejected by them, *and sold for thirty pieces of silver.* Joseph was *carryed into* Egypt; and so persecution *drove Christ into* Egypt *presently after he was born.* Joseph was *falsly accused & condemned*: so was *Christ.* Josephs troubles ended in his advancement; so all the troubles of Christ *wrought for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: God having therefore highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name*: for now Christ is set down at the right hand of the Father. But especially in this, *Ioseph* did type out *Iesus Christ*, and in that dreadful lasting famine in *Egypt. Ioseph* had the custody of all the corne in the land, and he had the issuing out of all the provision for bread, in all the land of *Egypt*: So the Lord Jesus is the *Lord Keeper* of all that store of grace with

Gen. 37.3. Mat.3.17. Col.1.11. Gen.37. 20.21. Iohn 1.12. Gen 37.28 Mat.2.20. Gen.39. 20. Phil.2.9. Gen.41. 55.56.57.

with which believers are furniſhed, which grace is given to help them in time of need. Jeſus Chriſt hath the Key of *David*, he hath the Key of the treaſury of grace.

3. Another type of Jeſus Chriſt was *Joſhua*, who gave unto *Iſrael* entrance and poſſeſſion of the good land of *Canaan*, *hee will give grace and glory, and no good thing will hee withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Our Jeſus gives his people a *beter reſt* then ever *Joſhua* brought *Iſrael unto.* Pſ. 84.11. Heb 4.8,9.

4. Another type of Chriſt was the Candleſtick of the tabernacle, the ſeven lamps whereof did give light unto the whole tabernacle. Now theſe *ſeven lamps*, what did they type out but the graces of the Spirit of Chriſt? for ſo it is ſaid, that there were *ſeven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God.* The Holy Ghoſt and the graces of it, being ſo deſcribed by *ſeven ſpirits* in this regard, becauſe of the variety and protection of that grace which is in the Lord Jeſus and by his Spirit communicated to all his members. Ex.25.27. Rev 4.5. Zech. 4.2.

3. The third proofe of this doctrine may be drawn from the conſideration of thoſe cleare teſtimonies of the truth of the New Teſtament. St. *John* ſpeaks thus of Chriſt, that *of his fulneſſe we have received, and grace for grace.* In Chriſt there is not onely *plenty* but *bounty*; not onely an abundance of all grace, but a *redundance* of grace. Chriſtians have the fulneſſe of the *veſſel*, but Chriſt hath the Ioh. 1 16. expounded *Plenitudo repletiva & diffuſiva*

the fulneſſe of a *fountaine*. Take a drop of water out of a veſſel, and it is not ſo full as before; but draw as much water as you pleaſe out of the Well of the water of life, and there is no want of water. From Chriſt wee receive *grace for grace*; that is, ſay ſome, the grace of the New Teſtament, added to that grace which was revealed under the Old Teſtament. Or *grace for grace*, that is, ſay others, a perfection of grace according to the Perfection that is in Chriſt. As in a natural generation, the childe doth receive from his Father limme for limme, and part for part: in this ſpiritual regeneration, Jeſus Chriſt (*the everlaſting Father*) doth give grace for grace. Or you may underſtand this expreſſion *grace for grace*, that Jeſus Chriſt is not onely the Author of Grace, but gives *grace for grace*, that is, one grace after another, *grace upon grace*; the being of grace, and the increaſe of grace are both from Chriſt. This alſo appeares that Chriſt is the Author and beſtower of all grace by that ordinary prayer wherewith the Apoſtle doth uſually cloſe up his Epiſtles, *The grace of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt be with you all.* The like prayer we have to the *Romans*, to the *Galatians*, *brethren The grace of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit.* So alſo in the cloſe of the Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, *Theſſalonians*, and to *Timothy*, *Grace be with thee. Amen.* All this is to note, that Jeſus Chriſt is the fountaine from whence, and the Conduit by whom all grace is

Plenitudo vaſis, Plenitudo fontis.

Perfectio partium, non graduum.

Iſa. 6. 9.

Gratia novâ gratiâ cumulatam.

2 Cor 13. 14. Rom. 16. 24. Gal. 6. 18. Phil. 4. 23. 1 Thel. 5. 28. 1 Tim. 6. 21.

is conveyed unto beleevers. As in the vision that the Prophet Zechary saw *There was two Olive-branches, which through the two golden pipes, did empty the golden oyl out of themselves*: So Jesus Christ, that true Olive tree, doth drop and distill grace upon his Church, whereby they receive from his fulnesse grace for grace, Zech. 4. 12.

But in giving his honour unto Christ, doe you not derogate from God the Father, when you say that all grace is from Christ? Object. 1.

1. It is no derogation to God the Father to ascribe this unto Christ, because *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulnesse dwell.* Ans. 1.

2. And besides, *Christ and the father are one.* In saying all grace is from Christ, wee also say, all is from the Father too: and in saying it is from the Father, we say it is from Christ too. And therefore it is an ordinary prayer prefixed to the beginning of most of the Epistles: *Grace be unto you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.* So that in the subscription, and in the inscription of each Epistle, grace is ascribed to God the Son, but so as not excluding God the Father, and to God the Father not excluding the Son. Ans. 2. Col. 1. 19. Ioh. 10. 30. Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 3. Eph. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 2 Col. 1. 2. 1 Thes. 1. 1, &c.

3. And then againe, Jesus Christ is commissionated and designed by the Father, to give out grace to his people: for so Christ speaks of himselfe, *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* Now it is the will of God, that from Christ believers, should receive both justifying and Ans. 3. Iohn 6. 48.

1 Thes. 4.3 sanctifying grace. *Our sanctification is Gods Will*, and Christ came to fulfill that will of God: for so speaks the Apostle, *Sacrifices and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hast pleasure therein: then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will (O God;) by which Will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* So that the will of God the Father, and the will of Jesus Christ are the same in the bestowing of grace. Jesus Christ received a commission from God the Father, to bestow grace upon his people; and will you see how that commission runs? you shall find it in the Prophet *Isaiah*; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meeke, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* Christ had a Commission under his Fathers hand and seale, *For him hath the Father sealed. Joseph* received authority from *Pharaoh*, and it was no dishonour to *Pharaoh* that *Joseph* was commissionated to issue out all the stores of corne to the Egyptians in the time of that famine: no more is it any dishonour to the father, that Jesus Christ doth bestow and convey grace upon beleevers.

Heb. 10.9, 10.

Isa.61.1.

Joh.6 27.

But doth not this put the Spirit out of Office, who is called the holy Spirit, and the Spirit of grace, because he doth work grace and holiness in

in the hearts of the people of God?

Sol.

What Chriſt is ſaid to work, that the holy Spirit alſo doth; becauſe by the Spirit of God Chriſt worketh. It is a good rule that the work of the bleſſed Trinity *ad extra*, are undivided; al thoſe works which are external, and relative to the creatures, as to create, preſerve, redeem, ſanctifie, &c. are in reſpect of the things wrought, equally common to all the perſons of the bleſſed Trinity. So that we may ſay, *whatſoever things that the Father doth, thoſe things doth the Son likewiſe*, and thoſe things alſo doth the Holy Ghoſt; the work of Sanctification is equally aſcribed unto all the Perſons. *God the Father Sanctifies his people.* God the Son doth ſanctifie his members, for he is their *ſanctification. He loved the Church, and give himſelfe for it, that he might ſanctifie and cleanſe it, with the waſhing of water through the Word.* And yet the work of Sanctification is moſt frequently aſcribed to the Holy Ghoſt; *Goodneſſe, Righteouſneſs*, and *Truth*, and indeed all grace being called the *fruit of the Spirit*; and the Spirit is called *the Spirit of grace and ſupplication, and the ſpirit of holineſſe and ſanctification.* So our Regeneration is aſcribed unto God the Father. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us againe to a lively hope.* And ſo alſo wee are the children of Chriſt by Regeneration, for in this reſpect Chriſt is called the *Father of eternity. Behold* (ſaith the Pro-

Opera Trinitatis ad extra, ſunt indiviſa.

Iohn 5. 19.

Iude v. 1.

1 Cor. 1. 30.

Eph. 5. 25, 26.

Eph. 5. 9.

Gal. 5. 22.

1 Pet. 1, 3.

Iſa. 9. 6.

phet in the name of Christ) *I and the children*
Isa.18.8. *which thou hast given me*; and that there the
Prophet speaks of Christ, is cleare from the
application of it to him in the Epistle to the
Heb. 2.13. *Hebrews. Behold I and the children which God*
hath given me. Neither is the Holy Ghost ex-
cluded from this working of grace and rege-
neration in us, for Christ tels *Nicodemus*, that
Ioh. 3. 3,4. *except a man be born again; except a man be*
born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter
into the Kingdome of God. So it is said, that
God the Father blessed *Abraham*, and yet the
blessing of *Abraham* came upon the Gentiles
Gal. 3.14. *through Christ*, that they might receive the
promise of the Spirit. By all which instances it
doth appeare, that though there are diversi-
ties of gifts, yet the same spirit; and though
there are differences of administrations, yet
the same Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of all
grace through the holy Spirit.

2. The reason and ground of this, why Je-
sus Christ is the Author, Purchaser and con-
veyer of grace to his people.

1. Because God the Father hath appointed
Jesus Christ, as Mediatour to transact the
great work of sanctifying and saving his E-
lect.

2. Because by this shall the reproach be
rowled away from Christ, who in his life
time was reputed the greatest of all Male-
factours, and accordingly suffered death.
They were wont to say, *can any good come out*
of Nazareth? God hath therefore given
him

him a name above all names, that he ſhould not only be *anointed with oile above his fellowes*, by his receiving the Spirit *without meaſure*, but that the oil that was *poured upon the head of our High Prieſt, ſhould run down upon the skirts of his garments*; and that grace which was abundant in him, ſhould alſo be redundant to his Church, and run down, and diffuſe it ſelf to his members.

3. To manifeſt that Jeſus Chriſt was the ſecond *Adam*, and came into the world to repaire the breaches which the ſin of the firſt *Adam* had made. For by the fall we did not only contract upon our ſelves the guilt of *Adams* ſinne, to take off which we have need of the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt imputed; but we have drawn upon our ſelves the filthineſſe and pollution of ſinne; to take away the power whereof, only the grace, holineſſe, and inherent righteouſneſſe of Chriſt imputed to us doth availe: and as the firſt *Adam* was the Author and conveyer both of the guilt, filthineſſe, and puniſhments of ſin to his poſterity; ſo Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond *Adam* conveighs the life of grace into all his. As the firſt *Adam* was the Author to communicate naturall life, as he *was made a living ſoule*; ſo the ſecond *Adam* did communicate the ſpirituall life of grace as he was made a *quickning ſpirit*. From the firſt *Adam* by natural generation and propagation, we receive corruption for corruption; ſo from the ſecond *Adam* we receive grace for grace. 1 Cor. 15. 45.

1. *Use* of this Doctrine is for Confutation.

1. Of the Socinians errour, who say that all grace in Christ, whether his active or passive righteousnesse, was onely to qualifie his person and to merit his own glorification, without any reference unto us, unlesse as an examplar or patterne. But this opinion is sufficiently confuted by this Doctrine, by which hath been shown, that as all our grace is from Christ, so that abundance of grace that is in Christ is for us. As the woman hath abundance of milk in her brest, not for her selfe, but for her childe; and the Sun hath abundance of light, not for it selfe, but for the world: So Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth, but this fulnesse is in order to the filling of his members. As in the naturall body there are some speciall parts, that do stand as officers unto all the rest; the stomack receives much meat, not for it selfe, but that it might communicate it to all the members; the head hath the senses seated in it, not for it selfe, but for the whole body: So it is in the mystical body, whereof Christ is the head; the abundance of grace, which is treasured up in Christ, is in order to supply every member with grace. *For their sakes* (saith Christ himselfe of his elect,) *I sanctifie my selfe, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* Some doe refer this to Christ, being set apart to the office of Mediatour, that it was not for his owne sake, but for the sake of his members: and though there

Ioh. 17. 19

there be grace enough in Christ to qualifie his person, yet also there is grace enough in him to justifie our persons too, and sanctifie our natures.

2. This also reproves the errour, pride and folly of the Pelagians, Papists and Arminians, who derogate from God, and arrogate to themselves. These people like *Samson*, have lost their spirituall strength, but doe not, will not know that it is departed from them; They are poor, and yet are proud, and while they are *setting up the praise of nature, they do prove themselves the enemies of grace.* Alas, while they boast of a *Liberum arbitrium*, they have cause to bewail a *servum arbitrium*, as *Luther* cals it. It is true, man by the fall did not lose the faculty it selfe, but he hath lost the rectitude of it. And yet proud man will be like the spider, spinning out a thread of his owne, and thinking to climbe up to heaven by threds spun out of his owne bowels: but let such who rejoice in this *Mihi soli debeo*, take heed at last, *that his hope be not cut off, and that his trust become like a spiders web.* Alas poor proud wretch! who made thee to differ? *Grevincovius* the Arminian, makes this proud answer to the Apostles question, *I my selfe made my selfe to differ.* This is Divinity much like that of the Heathens. *Seneca* said, *That we live, that's of God, but that we live well, that's of our selves.* And *Cicero* hath also this saying, and he tels us it is the judgement of all men, *That prosperity and successe is*

Sub laudibus naturæ latent inimici gratiæ. Aug.

Iob 8. 14.

from God, and must be sought of God, but wisdome that is gotten by our selves, which gave *Augustine* occasion to pass this censure upon him; *Cicero endeavouring to make men free, he made them sacrilegious.* But let us take heed of this proud leaven of Arminianisme, and learn from hence to be convinced of the emptinesse and insufficiency of our nature to any supernaturall good. For alas! *We are not sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* We have no grace but what we receive from Christ, *And grace is no way grace, unlesse it be every way free.* We have little reason to boast of the freedome of our will to any thing that is spiritually good, because our will is not *free*, till it be by grace *made free.* We have no power to become the sons of God *till it be given us to beleeve on his name, and such are born not of the will of man, but of God.*

Voluntas libera liberata. Aug.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

Serm. XV. At Lawrence Iury London. 1651.

My son, Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

FRom the last clause in this text, *viz. Grace that is in Christ Jesus,* we have gathered this observation, that

All those measures of grace whereof Believers are partakers, they doe receive them in

in and from Iesus Christ.

That this is so, we have proved, not onely by the types of the Old Testament, but also by the expresse testimony of the New Testament, and have also given the grounds and reasons of this point, with some Application, by way of reproofe and confutation of the Arminian and Socinian errors. It remaines we make some further Application of this point, and so conclude the whole discourse.

2. *Use* is by way of exhortation unto these duties following.

1. Dost thou receive all thy grace from Jesus Christ, then labour to be humble in the acknowledgment of this. Let the consideration and conscientious application of this Doctrine, quell all boasting in us of any excellency received. *Our wisdome, righteousnesse, and sanctification, and redemption; are all from Christ, and therefore he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.* Consider, *who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why didst thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?* Who but a proud foole would magnifie himselfe in that, which either another giveth him, or another hath done for him? We count it an odious pride and folly in a man to boast himselfe of that which another hath done. And therefore the Apostle professeth, that he did not carry himselfe as those false teachers had done, who

1 Cor. 1. 30, 31.

2 Cor. 4. 7.

who were crept into the Church of *Corinth*, saith the Apostle, *We doe not boast of things beyond our measure, that is, of other mens labors nor boast in another mans line of things made ready to our hands.* Now all grace is made ready to our hands, and is onely the worke of Jesus Christ in us, *who worketh all our works for us.* *Ammianus Marcellinus* tels us of one *Lampadius*, a great person in *Rome*, who in all parts of the City, where other men had bestowed cost in building, he would set up his owne name, not as a Repairer of the work, but as the chiefe Builder. Such folly are they guilty of, who will set their owne names before Gods, over the worke of grace in their own soules. *Oh remember that boasting is excluded by the law of faith.* Faith is that grace which emptieth the creature of all its conceited excellencies, and faith is that grace which will give God the praise of the glory of all his grace. Shall the groome of the stable boast of our masters horses: and the Stage-player of his borrowed robes? shall the mud wall be proud that the Sun shines upon it? We must say of all the good that is in us, as the young man said to the Prophet of his hatchet, *Alas Master, it was borrowed.* The Church of God is compared to the *Moone*; Now all the light which the Moone giveth to the world, she doth but distribute what is lent her; all our graces and the shining of them, whereby our light is seen before men, is but a borrowed light from the Sun of Righte-

2 Cor. 10. 15, 16.

Ego & Deus meus.

Rom. 3. 27.

2. King. 6. 5

Cant. 6. 10. *Lucem acceptam refero.*

Rightouſneſſe. *David* ſets us an excellent patterne, when he makes that humble acknowledgement: *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael our Father for ever and ever. Thine (Oh Lord) is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty, for all that is in heaven, or in earth is thine; thine is the Kingdome (O Lord) and thou art exalted as head above all; Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou raigneſt over all: and in thine hand is power and might, and in thy hand it is to make great and to give ſtrength unto al. Now therefore our God, we thank thee and praiſe thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people that we ſhould offer ſo willingly after this ſort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. Oh Lord our God, all this ſtore that we have prepared to build thee an houſe for thy own name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own*; which is an excellent pattern of humility after inlargment in duty. *David* and the people had offered both bountifully and willingly, towards the houſe of God, the Lord had enlarged both their hearts and their hands. Now all they did for God, is here aſcribed to Gods Grace and bounty towards them. It is excellent humility to aſcribe our enlargment in Gods ſervice, to the enlargment of Gods grace towards us; the way to have grace increaſed, is humbly to acknowledge from whence we receive every grace.

1 Chron, 29 10,11, 12,13,15, 16.

2. Aſcribe unto Jeſus Chriſt the glory of all

all the grace you have been made partakers of. Thus did *Paul* upon all occasions, *I laboured more abundantly then they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me, and by the grace of God I am what I am. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* It was wel done of the good and faithful servant to say, *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds*; he doth not say, *Lord, my paines*, but *thy pound hath gained.* When we give God the glory of his grace, God will give us the comfort and increase of our grace. Learne therefore to ascribe unto Christ the initial, progressive, and consummative work of grace in your soules. *Iesus Christ only, who hath begun a good work in you, wil perform it untill his own day.* Jesus Christ is *the author and finisher of our faith.* He is the *Alpha* and the *Omega.* And therefore the Apostle prayes, *The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Iesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you.* grace is rather like *manna* that comes from heaven, then the *Corn* that growes out of the earth. Grace is inspired from heaven. Gifts and parts are acquired by industry and pains here on earth. What God said by way of comparison between *Canaan* and *Egypt*, is very applicable to this purpose. For thus the Lord speaks to *Israel*, *the Land whither thou goest in to possesse it, is not as the Land of Egypt whence thou camest out; where thou sowest thy*

1 Cor. 15. 10.

Gal. 2. 20

Luk. 19. 16.

Phil. 1. 6.
Heb. 12. 2.
Rev. 1. 8.

1 Pet. 5. 10.

Deut 11. 10, 11, 12.

seed

ſeed, and watereſt it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: but the land whither ye go to poſſeſſe it, is a land of hils and valleyes, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord thy God careth for. Thus it is with grace and nature; nature may be, and is improved with induſtry and pains, and is like *Egypt*, which might be watered by the foot, *i. e.* with digging gutters and trenches, which is the labour of the foot to let in the ſtreams of the river of *Nilus*, when he yearly overflowes his banks; but grace is like the raine from heaven, which onely falleth where God doth appoint, who cauſeth it to raine upon one City, and not upon another, and one piece is rained upon, and the piece whereupon it raineth not, withereth. Amos 4.7

3. Diſclaim all merit and ſelf-ſufficiency; for ſo much as we arrogate to our own merit, ſo much we derogate from the free grace and mercy of God. If with *Ephraim*, God hath enlarged his grace towards thee, that *thou art like a green fig-tree*, yet let God have the glory of all thy fruitfulneſſe, and let him ſay, *from me is thy fruit found.* Oh conſider, *that thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee.* Say, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name do we give the praiſe.* A gracious heart knowes his own inability, and his owne inſufficiency and imperfection, that he is unable to overcome the leaſt ſinne though never ſo ſmall, to exerciſe any grace though never ſo weak, to performe the leaſt duty though never Hoſ. 14.8. Rom. 11. 18.

never so easie: and as we have cause to acknowledge our inability, so also our sinfull imperfections; if God should enter into judgement with us, he might condemne us not onely for our worst sins, but for our best duties.

Heb. 12.2. Ἀφορῶντες. 4. Haue an eye to Jesus Christ; *Look up to him the Author and Finisher of our faith.* The word *looking unto*, signifies in the Original, such a looking unto, as that wee look off those things which may divert our looking up to Jesus. Labour (my beloved) to look still unto Christ as the Author of grace, when you have the greatest exercise, or increase, or comfort of your grace. Say when thou hast the greatest strength of grace, as *Jehoshaphat* did when he had that great strength of men 500000. *Lord, we know not what to do, only our eyes are upon thee.* 2 Chr. 20. 12. There are these three things which we should eye in Christs giving us grace.

1. How voluntarily and freely Jesus Christ doth issue out his grace to his people. Never did a mother more willingly give her child suck, when her brests did ake and were ready to break, then Jesus Christ doth bestow grace upon his people. Christ doth not like a Merchant, sell his grace, but like a King freely bestows all: see the tenor of the Covenant of grace how free it was, *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no mony, come yee, buy, and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk, without mony and without* Isa. 55. 1. *price,*

price. Let him that is a thirſty come, and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely; nothing is ſo free as grace: it is offered and is beſtowed upon the freeſt termes imaginable. All that Chriſt requires is but our receiving it. It is the delight of Chriſt to ſhew mercy and beſtow grace upon his people. It is the meat of Chriſt to doe the Will of God that ſent him, and to finiſh his work. Never was man more willing to eat his meat when he is hungry, then Jeſus Chriſt was to do good and beſtow grace upon them that wanted it. So alſo it is ſaid of Chriſt in *Pſal.* 72. (which is clearly a propheſie of Jeſus Chriſt) *that hee ſhould come down like raine upon the mowen graſſe, and as ſhowers that water the earth.* Now there is nothing comes down more ſweetly and freely, then the raine upon a dry and thirſty ground.

Rev. 22. 17.

Pro. 8. 31.

Ioh. 4. 34.

Pſal. 72. 6.

2. Secondly, look unto Jeſus the Author of grace, how irreſiſtibly he doth communicate his grace. *I will work and who can let it?* It is true, not onely of Gods eternal deliverances, but is as true of Gods working grace in the hearts of his people, *Who ſhall let?*

Iſa. 40. 13.

1. Sathan ſhall not, for though hee bee a ſtrong man, and armed, and hath got poſſeſſion, yet when Chriſt comes, he is ἰσχυρότερος ſtronger then Satan.

2. Sin ſhall not bee able to hinder Gods work of grace. Grace ſhall be too hard for the ſtrongeſt oppoſition that is made againſt it. It is true, a man may and doth reſiſt the grace

grace of God, with a gainsaying and contradicting resistance, but not with an overcoming resistance.

3. Thirdly, looke up to Jesus the bestower of grace, how proportionable he gives grace sutable, and answerable to thy temptations and need. *God divides to every one his grace and gifts, severally as he will,* and yet he gives grace that shall be enough. *My grace is sufficient for thee,* said God to *Paul*; sufficient to quell corruptions, sufficient to repell temptation, sufficient to make thee wait upon mee, till I give thee deliverance.

1 Cor 12.11

2 Cor. 12.9

5. Be exhorted to have recourse to Jesus Christ for supply of grace. Go to Jesus, and by the Prayer of faith approach to the Throne of grace, and beg grace to help thee in time of need. Go unto God by Christ, and God through Christ will supply all your wants. *My God* saith *Paul* to the *Philippians, shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory in Iesus Christ.* Go to this God, and expresse your selves before his throne with sensible complaints, and earnest requests, say, Lord, seeing there is so much water in the fountain, why should my cistern be empty? such fulnesse of grace in Christ, and so little grace in my heart? Lord hast thou not *gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also?* and that's the worst that can be said of me, & hast thou not a blessing for me also?

Phil. 4.19. ἐν τῷ χριστῷ.

Psal. 58.19.

3. *Use* of caution, though we say that all grace is in and from Christ.

1 This

1. This ſhould not cut off our endeavours after grace: we ſhould ſo earneſtly labour to get grace, as if there were no way to have it but by our endeavours; we ſhould ſo ſtrive to get heaven, as if it were to be gotten by our fingers, by our own paines. Gods promiſes and purpoſes of giving grace ſhould rather quicken, and greaten, then any wayes ſlacken our endavors after grace. See how the Apoſtle makes Gods working grace in us a ground why we ſhould work: *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will, and to do of his good pleaſure.* And againe, *I know the thoughts that I thinke towards you (ſaith the Lord) thoughts of peace, and not of evill, to give you the expected end*; but ſee alſo how God joyns their *duty*, with his *promiſe*, the *meanes* unto the *end*: *Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go, and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.* So alſo in the propheſie of *Ezekiel*, The Lord had promiſed to do great things for them, and then addes. *Thus ſaith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the houſe of* Iſrael, *to do it for them.* Gods promiſe to *David* to build him an houſe, did not at all ſlack his prayer to God for that purpoſe: for thus wee finde *David* praying, *Thou, O my God, haſt told thy ſervant, that thou wilt build him an houſe, therefore thy ſervant hath found in his heart to pray before thee. And now Lord (thou art God, and haſt promiſed this goodneſs to thy ſervant) now therfore let it pleaſe*

Cant. 1.

Phil. 2. 12. 13.

Ier. 29. 11, 12.

Ezek. 36. 37.

2 Chro. 17. 15, 26, 27.

thee to blesse the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed for ever. Thus also
1 Cor. 15. 10. did *Paul, By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vaine, but I laboured more abundantly then they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me.* See how he joins Gods grace and his own endeavours together. Thou must then so endeavour after grace, as if it were to be gotten by *labour*, and not bestowed by *favour*; yet when thou hast done all thou canst, thou must acknowledge grace to be free, as if thou hadst not laboured at all.

Caut. 2. 2. Though there be abundance of grace in Christ, yet let all such as have no interest in Christ, take heed how they flatter themselves into a conceit, that they shall receive grace from Christ; Interest in the Person, gives communication of his grace. As it was in Christs Person, he could not have had those excellencies and attributes which were in God, had not his two natures, humane and divine been personally united in him. And therefore it is said by vertue of the hypostaticall union, that *in him*, i.e. *in his person, dwelleth all*
Col. 2. 9. *the fulnesse of the Godhead bodily.* So unlesse there be that mysticall union between Christ and us, we could not be partakers *nor grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Union is the ground of Communion*, and therefore
Joh. 1. 12, 16. compared. we read first of *receiving Christ*, and then afterwards of *receiving of his fulnesse grace for*

grace.

grace. Though thou art neer Christ by Profession, yet if thou art not one with Christ by faith, thou canst not receive any vertue from him. If a man tye food to any part of his body, it will not nourish him, because it is not received, concocted or concorporated; that only nourishes, which becomes one and the same substance with us. So we receive strength and increase of grace from Christ, as we are united unto him by faith. Take a graft, and tye it to a tree, and it brings forth no fruit; but let it be united unto a tree by implantation, then the graft growes fruitfull: so *without Christ*, (or as it is in the Originall) *seperate from Christ, you can do nothing.* He that by faith is not planted together in the likeneſſe of Christs death, shall never receive spirituall nourishment from him. He that doth not abide in Christ, is cast forth *as a Branch*; he was never a true Branch, only seemed to be one. Christ is a fountaine of grace, but it is faith that drawes out of this fountaine. Christ is a treasury of grace, but it is faith that unlocks this treasury. By our communion with Christ we receive grace for grace. We are made by love, meekneſſe and patience, like unto Christ; but by faith we are made one with Christ; and that Union is the cause of communion, and therefore Christleſs persons are graceleſs persons.

Ioh. 15.5: χωρὶς ἐμοῦ Rom. 6.5.

Iob 15.6. ἐβλήθη ἔξω ὡς τὸ ῥῆμα.

3. If men want grace, yet let them know that not Christ, but themselves are to be blamed

Cant. 3.

med. There is fulneſſe in Christ, there is grace enough in Christ, in him there is fulneſſe of ſufficiency, of efficiency, and of redundancy: but if a veſſel be ſtopt and caſt it in to the ſea, and it will receive no water; and the fault is in the veſſel which is ſtopt, there is no want of water in the Sea. They that have the river water or conduit-water come into their houſes, if no water come, you muſt not conclude there is no water in the river or fountain, but that the Pipes are either ſtopt or broken; So it is, if ever you are ſtraitened, you are ſtraitned in your own bowels, and not ſtraitned in your God. If a houſe be dark, it is not for any want of light in the Sun, but for want of windowes in the houſe: So if thou wanteſt grace, it is not for want of grace in Christ, but for want of faith in thy ſoule, to draw and derive more grace for Christ.

Cant. 4. 4. Envy not the grace of God in others. Though Christ ſhould beſtow more grace on others then on thee, *yet thy eye muſt not be evil, becauſe he is good.* Thou ſhouldeſt not have an *envious eye*, becauſe Christ hath a *bountiful hand.* It is not onely a fault in wicked men, to envy the grace that is in good men, as *Cain* envyed *Abel, becauſe his ſacrifice was accepted, and his own rejected*; but alſo even good men are too apt to envy one another. *Joſephs* brethren envyed their brother, becauſe he was beloved of his father; and *Peter* (it is thought) envied *John* the beloved

Mat. 10. 14.

John 21. 20, 21.

diſciple.

disciple. But take heed of envy, it's dishonourable to God, and often hinders us from receiving mercy and grace from God. To envy Christs dispensing of his grace, to whom and in what measure he pleases, is unbecoming a Christian; to rejoyce in others happinesse is to do as the Angels of heaven; to envy others good is like the devils in hell. Would a father take it well that his children fall out about their portion, which their father hath given them. God is absolutely free, to give one or two, or five talents, as he pleases, and if another have more grace then thou, yet be thankfull for that grace thou hast, and envy no man.

Lastly, Lessen not thy grace thou hast received. As there is no sin smal, because it is an offence against the great God: So there is no grace little, because it comes from the great God. Unthankfulnesse hinders this oyl from running. As a man must not bee contented with the greatest measure of grace, so he must not be unthankful for the least measure of grace. Consider it is Jesus Christ that hath begun the work of grace: that there is *some little good wrought in thee*, is the work of Christ, and he that hath begun a good work will also finish it; he that hath given grace a *being in thy soule, will also strengthen thee with strength in thy soule, and perfect what concerneth thee.* Do not thou thy selfe quench the flax that begins to smoake, nor break the reed that is bruised, but bee

Cant. 5.

Psal. 138: 3, 8.

thankful to Christ, that hath handled this smoaking flax, and wait upon him, who will so accomplish his work, that he will send forth judgement unto victory,

Mat. 12. 10.

Job 30. 23.

For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

A funerall Sermon preached by M. *Love*, at the Funerall of Mistrisse *B.* At *Lawrence Iury London.* April 29, 1651. being the last Sermon that ever he preached.

IN the handling of these words 'tis needfull I should dispach these two things.

1. Give you the scope.
2. The sense of the words.

For the first, the scope of the words, because they are usher'd in with an illative or causal particle (*For*), which carries a reference to somewhat that goeth before; and that you may distinctly take notice of the reference; you must looke backe to the 18. *verse* of this chapter: there *Iob* tells you of a strong disease under which he laboured: *By the great force of my disease is my garment changed, it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.* It seemes the disease was so strong upon him, it even strangled his breath, it was as a collar about his neck: upon the sense of this his disease, he breaks out into this holy meditation, *For I know that thou wilt bring mee to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* Now take a hint from the scope and context

Verse 18.

context that *ſickneſſes and diſeaſes they ſhould be remmbrancers of us about our dying.* Sick men ſhould alwaies think with themſelves they are dying men, and they that dye daily, need not fear dying ſuddenly. So I come to the ſenſe of the words, *I know.* It is not to bee underſtood of a notional or ſpeculative knowledge, that doth ſignifie a bare and naked knowledge of a general truth; but ſuch kind of knowledge as is practical and experimental: and ſo alſo did *Iunius* tranſlate it. This experimental knowledge wrought in *Iob* holy preparations for death, *I know*, and by experience can tell. I have ſuch a kind of knowledge, that hath practicalneſſe and experience in it. (*That thou wilt bring me to death*) This ſhewed the holineſs of *Iob* in oppoſition to the doctrine of the Heathens who gheſt that all ſuch events fell out by fate and fortune, and not by the determinate decree and counſel of the moſt High. (*And to the houſe appointed for all living.*) Though he doth not ſpeake here where this houſe is, yet it doth in *Iob* 17. 13. *If I wait, the grave is mine houſe, and I have made my bed in the darkneſſe.* Now that which was his houſe, muſt be the houſe of all living, that is, the grave. Now the grave is compared to an houſe. 1. Alluding to the Egyptian Sepulchers, which were made like a houſe with ſeveral arched rooms. 2. Becauſe there we dwel in ſilence. Thus ye have the words briefly paraphraſed unto you. Now

Non ſolum rem notam ſed quaſi peculiari experientiâ ſibi perſuaſam, ſignificat. Pined. *Experior.* Iun.

Iob 17. 13.

I ſhall give you ſome practical deductions from them. *For I know that thou wilt bring me to death.* Theſe words are the gracious ſpeech of *Job*, touching his own mortality: and in them we have three particulars.

1. The Rationality of this ſpeech. He brings it in with an illative. *For*,

2. The particularity of it. He draws a particular meditation of death, &c. *Me.*

3. The piety of it, he acknowledges Gods hand in bringing him to death. *Thou*, and not chance or fortune.

For the firſt, the Rationality of it. Holy *Iob* doth not ſpeake of his death without ſome cauſe, but for the ground and reaſon foregoing. *By the great force of my diſeaſe is my garment changed, it binds me about as the Collar of my Coat*; and then he breakes out into this holy meditation, *For I know thou wilt bring me to death.* From thence obſerve,

Doct. 1. *That it is a very rationall thing in weakneſſe to have holy meditations about death.* Job lay under a diſeaſe, that even was ready to choak and ſtrangle him, and then he breaks out into this holy meditation, *For I know thou wilt bring me to death, &c.* It is obſervable, the Ancients take notice, that *David* made three Pſalmes, when he lay upon his ſick bed, *Pſalm* 6. *Pſalm* 30. *Pſalm* 39. and in all theſe Pſalmes there are divine raptures and holy meditations about death, *Iob* 17. 1. *My breath is corrupt, my daies are extinct, the grave is ready for me.* He doth not mean an ill ſavour in

in his breath but it was an obſtruction and ſtopping in his breath; that is, he was *ſhort-breathed, and ſtraitned under a violent diſeaſe.* It is conceived, that *Iob* had that diſeaſe which is called the Tiſſick; and the conſideration of that diſeaſe, made him thinke that the grave was ready for him. So *Heman* lay under a violent diſeaſe, *Pſal* 88.3,4,5. *For my ſoul is ful of trouble, and my life draws nigh to the grave, I am accounted with them that go down into the pit, I am as a man that hath no ſtrength free among the dead, like the ſlain that lie in the grave, whom thou numbreſt no more, and they are cut off from thy hand.* When ſickneſſe is in the chamber, then death is at the window. Diſeaſes are but the meſſengers, harbingers and forerunners of death; in the Prophets phraſe, *Death is come up into our windowes:* When diſeaſes are in the houſe, then death is at the threſhold. So *Iob* reckoneth, *When I lie downe, I ſay, when ſhall I riſe and the night begone? and I am full of toſſings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day*: and, then he ſaith, *My fleſh is clothed with worms and clods of duſt. My skin is broken, and become loathſome.*

Pſal. 88. 3, 4, 5

Ier. 9. 21

Iob 7. 4, 5

Uſe 1.

Firſt *Uſe*, is to condemne thoſe, that when they lie on a ſick bed, they hope for life, but never think of death; their own guiltineſſe and their own wickedneſſe of living doth ſo fill them with fear and horrour, that the thoughts of death are irkſom and tedious to them. Juſt like *Lewis* the eleventh King

King of *France*, when he lay ſick of a dangerous diſeaſe, he charged his ſervants and attendants, that they ſhould not ſpeak of death in his hearing. Many mens bodies are Magazines and Hoſpitals of diſeaſes, who when they are living never think of death, though there is but little betwixt them and the grave.

Uſe 2. Second *Uſe*, is to thoſe that are healthfull and ſtrong; 'tis true, diſeaſes are the immediate harbingers and forerunners of death in an ordinary way, yet you may ſoone dye, though a diſeaſe ſeize not on you. As the fruits of a tree do more periſh by extraordinary windes and tempeſts, then do ſtay upon the tree, and are gathered by the husbandman; ſo violent diſeaſes may ſoone kill you, though marrow be in your bones, and ſtrength in your joynts. *Paracelſus* a skilfull Phyſician. he gloried, that if any man would follow his Phyſical Preſcriptions, he ſhould not dye any violent death, but meerly through age; and yet that boaſting man before he was forty years of age, he himſelf dyed of a Feaver. Thus I have done with the firſt conſideration, the Reaſonableneſſe of this; I am under a ſore diſeaſe, and therefore I do think of death.

Secondly, the Particularity of *Jobs* ſpeech is to be obſerved. *Iob* doth not ſtand upon that general concluſion, *There is no man that liveth, but he ſhall ſee death*, Pſal. 88. 48. He doth not ſpeake in generall ſo, but *I know*

I

I muſt dye. From thence obſerve this point,

That general Concluſions about death, ſhould be forced upon the ſoul by particular applications. Beloved, we ſhould not only have general notions and empty ſpeculations about death, but practical and particular concluſions concerning our death, ſuch as may lay an awe upon the conſcience. Thus is the caſe of the godly, ſaid *Eliphaz, Thou ſhalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a ſhock of Corne cometh in his ſeaſon*; and then he adds *ver.* 27 *Lo this, we have ſearched it, hear it, and know thou it for thy good.* General Concluſions that all muſt die, muſt be enforced upon the ſoul with particular applications, to turne you from the world, to beget in you ſerious thoughts touching your future and eternall welfare. General truths do not carry that force upon the conſcience, unleſſe they are drawn by applicative inference: and therefore *Pſ.* 73. *ult.* The Pſalmiſt ſaith not only, *It is good to draw near unto God*, but *it is good for me.* Doct. 2. Iob 5. 26, 27.

The third particular is the Piety of *Jobs* ſpeech, in theſe words, *Thou wilt bring mee to death.* Now there are three particulars in it which note *Iobs* Faith and Piety.

1. He doth not aſcribe dying to fate and fortune, but to the Providence of the moſt High. From thence obſerve,

That it is the property of the godly to ſee Gods hand in taking away men by death. It was but the Doct. 3.

the dotage of the Heathen that knew not God to aſcribe events to blind fortune; and it was the corruption of the *Chaldeans* to overlook the Deity in all fatall events; Yet *Iob* he deſired to ſee and ſubmit to death, and to Gods hand in bringing it upon him. *Thou wilt bring me to death.* Another thing obſervable is this, *I know thou wilt bring me to death.* It is not a notional and bare knowledge of the underſtanding, but ſuch a kinde of knowledge that is conſiderate and practical, which works upon the affections. From thence obſerve,

Doct. 4. *That though all men do know notionally they muſt dye, yet only godly men know it practically and conſiderately.* To know practically of your dying, conſider before-hand, how ſhall I do to lanch into the eternal gulfe? what ſhall become of me in another world, when I leave this? Is my peace made with God? Is my perſon juſtified? Am I in a ſtate of grace? Now *Iobs* ſpeech had latitude in it. *I know thou wilt bring me to death*, that is, I do ſo know it, that I will provide for it, and I will prepare for it, and I will lay a foundation for eternal life. *Solomon* ſpeaking of Funerall ſolemnity, ſaith he, *It is beter to go to the houſe of mourning, than to go to the houſe of feaſting; that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.* I, but all men that doe not lay death to heart, they may perhaps talk of death at a funeral; but the living they ſhall lay it to heart, *lay it upon the heart,*

Eccl. 7. 2

לבו יתן אל

as

as the Hebrew, they ſhall lay it to heart, and lay upon their hearts, *ſo Tremelius.* A wicked man layes it upon his tongue; but a godly man layes this truth upon his heart. There is none but a godly man, that ſo knows any thing of dying as to know it ſo practically, affectionately, and conſiderately, and ſo as to doe, theſe three things.

Dabit ad cor ſuum Ar. Mont. *Inditurus eſt iſtud animo ſuo.* Tremel.

1. Firſt none but a godly man conſiders of his dying that he dies deſervedly, he taſtes the bitterneſſe, and feels the burden of ſin; in his diſeaſes and ſenſe of approaching death, hee conſiders with himſelfe, that it is not a diſeaſe that will bring him to his grave, but the ſins of his life that kill him.

2. None knowes that he muſt die ſo as a godly man whoſe care it is to dye preparedly. A godly man he knows he muſt dye, and this knowledge makes him prepared for a dying time, to live every day as his laſt day. The prophet he ſpake of death in the former part of *Pſal.* 90. that *the daies of men are threeſcore yeares and ten.* See what follows, *So teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdome*; he doth mean by numbering our dayes, to live ſo exactly, as to count the number of our dayes to be ſo few, every day as if this were the laſt day; and this time as the time of the coming of Chriſt to judgement.

Pſal. 90. 11, 12.

3. None but a godly man knowes of his dying, ſo as to conſider that there is a neceſſity that ſin muſt dye in him before his body dies.

Moriantur ante te vitia, Sen.

dies, *Seneca* an Heathen could ſay, *Let thy vices die before thee.* There muſt not be only a ſuſpenſion, but a mortification of ſin. A godly man conſiders, though I live blameleſly, that men cannot ſay, Black is mine eie to any outward practice, yet I muſt have my inward luſts and corruptions dye before my body dye; and therefore they ought to be converſant in things that tend to mortification: this is to know death conſiderately and affectionately; whereas wicked men conſider of death notionally, their ſenſes tell them that all muſt dye. They ſay, all men, young and old, rich and poor muſt dye; but this is but matter of diſcourſe in them; but the godly know it with ſavoury knowledge.

Thirdly, *Jobs* piety was, in that he doth repreſent death to himſelfe, not in a formidable and dreadfull way, but under a comfortable repreſentation; *For I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the houſe. &c.* He doth repreſent the grave under the notion of a houſe, as he repreſents it elſewhere. From thence obſerve this point.

Doct. 5. *That a child of God, that hath not allowed guilt upon his conſcience, he may and ought to repreſent death to himſelfe in ſuch familiar repreſentations, as may make it leſſe dreadfull and more deſirable.* Sometimes it is repreſented as going to bed, *They ſhall reſt in their beds.* Iſa. 57. 2. A godly man when he lieth upon his death-bed, and by ſickneſſe is weary of his life, toſſing

ſing to and fro till the dawning of the day, let him think the grave will be but a bed of reſt unto him; ſo death is often ſtiled a ſleep. *And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth, ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt.* Death is embalmed with ſweet and comfortable language. Dan 12.2.

The grave is the houſe for all the living to be lodged in. If I wait, the grave is mine houſe, I have made my bed in the darkneſſe. The grave is the houſe that I muſt go to, as after a hard daies labour in my houſe I goe to bed in a dark night: So we goe to our beds, as into our graves for a long night; going to bed is but for a ſhort night, but going to the grave is for a long night; death is ſometimes repreſented with dreadfull conſiderations, but with amiableneſſe too. There is an abhorrency in nature againſt death, it is embalmed by Jeſus Chriſt, he lay in the grave three daies, to embalme the grave to you; though your beds be cloudy and dark, yet ye reſt in them till the Reſurrection day. *Doct.6.* Iob 17.13.

For the opening of the doctrine,

I ſhall diſpatch theſe two Queries.

1. I ſhall ſhew you why the grave is compared to an houſe.

2. I ſhall ſhew you what kinde of houſe the grave is.

For the firſt Query, why the grave is compared to an houſe? *Query* 1.

1. This Reaſon ſome Authors give, becauſe in

in ancient times, (as hath been hinted) among the Ægyptians, their graves and sepulchres, they were made after the fashion of houses, with Arches, and such kind of superstructures; therefore they say it is called an house.

2. Other Authors give this reason, because that as a man after a dayes labour abroad, he comes to his house for rest; so a man after a lifes labour in this world, he comes to his grave as to his house for rest.

Query 2. The second Query is this, what kind of house is the grave? Now I will give you these four properties of this house. 1. It is a desolate and a lonesome house. 2. It is a dark house. 3. It is an old house. 4. It is a silent house. For the first; The grave is,

Iob 3.14. 1. *A desolate and a lonesome house. I shal be,* said *Iob, with Kings & Counsellors of the earth which build desolate places for themselves:* that is, they build tombs, and monuments where they shall lye, and then they shall leave all their *attendance. When I shall bring thee down* Ezek: 26. 20. *with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down into the pit, that thou be not inhabited.* Job 17.14. *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the wormes, Thou art my mother and my sister;* there is all the company you will have, corruption and the wormes; friends bring you to your grave, and there they leave you.

2. Your

2. Your grave is a dark houſe, *I have made my bed in the darkneſſe*, that is, in the grave. The grave is like the ſleeping room in a houſe, not like the dining roome and working room. The dining room is to be light, and ſo the working roome, but the ſleeping room is dark. 'Tis but the ſtopping of the mouth of the grave, and it is but the drawing of the Curtains of the bed, where thou ſhalt lie in darkneſſe till the Reſurrection day. In the grave there is neither the light of the body, which is the eie; nor the light of the aire, which is the Sun: the Sunne it ſhall not ſhine there, nor the body ſee there. Therefore *Eccl.* 11. 9. *Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the daies of thy youth, and walk in the waies of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eies: but know thou that for all theſe things God wil bring thee unto judgement.* And *verſe* 8 *He had ſaid, remember the daies of darkneſſe; for they ſhall be many.* The meaning is this, The continuance in the grave which is the houſe of darkneſſe ſhall be long, even to the end of the world.

3. The grave is an old houſe, as old as *Adam*, he digged his grave with his owne fingers: *Wherfore as by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.* The grave it is a laſting houſe, a houſe where thou muſt ſtay a great while. *Eccl.* 11. 5. *Alſo when they ſhall be afraid of that which is*

high, and fear ſhall be in the way, and the Almond tree ſhall flouriſh, and the Graſhopper ſhall be a burden, and deſire ſhall faile, becauſe man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the ſtreets.' Tis a long home, a kinde of a houſe of eternity, a long while till Chriſts coming to judgment; our long home, in oppoſition to our pleaſant houſes, that is our ſhort home. Your houſes are your ſhort homes, but the graves are your long homes.

4. The grave is a ſilent houſe. *Pſal.* 31. 17. *Let me not be aſhamed Oh Lord, for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be aſhamed, and let them be ſilent in the grave.* The Pſalmiſt prayes here for deliverance from his Perſecutors; here is nothing but clamour, perſecution, and oppoſition and one ſhall not have a good word from them. But as *Job* comforts himſelfe in the grave, *there the voice of the oppreſſour ſhall not be heard.* So may we, we ſhall be at reſt, and ſilence there, there the weary ſhall be at reſt, and there the Priſoners ſhall reſt together. For the Uſes of this point.

Iob 3.18.

The firſt *Uſe*, is an Uſe of comfort to the godly, they may be comforted upon this doctrine. This doctrine is a doctrin that is dreadful to wicked men, their graves are dungeons to them; but to Gods children the grave is an houſe. Now you may be comforted upon theſe four conſiderations

1, That though the grave be an houſe, yet be comforted, it is a reſting houſe, *Job* 3.17. *There the wick'd ceaſe from troubling, & there the*

Iob 3.17.

the weary be at reſt. He ſpeaks here of the grave in *verſ.* 13. *For now ſhould I have lien ſtill and been quiet, I ſhould have ſlept, then had I been at reſt* There is no work to be done in this houſe, *Eccleſ* 9. 10. *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to doe do it with thy might; for there is no work nor divice, nor knowledge nor wiſdome in the grave whither thou goeſt,* Iſa. 57 2. *They ſhall reſt in their beds.*

2. That though the grave be a houſe, yet be comforted, it is but a ſleeping houſe, it is not a houſe where thou ſhalt be everlaſtingly. Beloved, though it be an houſe, yet it is but a ſleeping houſe; it ſhall not alwaies keepe your bodies; that is the meaning of *Pauls* exultation: *O death, where is thy ſting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?* He refers it to the Reſurrection; the grave though it compaſſe us, yet it ſhall not conquer us. Cor. 11. 57.

3. Though the grave be an houſe, yet be comforted, it is but an hiding houſe, ſuch a houſe as is but a hiding place for Gods people *Job* 14. 13. *Oh that thou wouldeſt hide me in the grave, that thou wouldeſt keep me in ſecret until thy wrath be paſt, that thou wouldeſt appoint me a ſet time and remember me.* Times may be ſo calamitous, that there may bee more ſafety under ground then above ground; they that have layne a long time in their graves may be more happy then thoſe that are living, *Iſa.* 26. 20. *Come my people enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee, hide thy ſelf as it were for a little moment* Iſa. 26. 20

untill the indignation be overpaſt. Though ſome refer this to a temporall deliverance, yet others refer it to the grave, where God lodges his children, when he takes them from the evill to come.

Though the grave be a houſe, yet be comforted, it is a perfumed houſe, a houſe imbalmed and perfumed by Chriſts lying in the grave. All the acts that Chriſt did, they were for our ſakes. Chriſt dyed to ſave us by dying: Chriſt lay buried in the grave, to make the grave a bed of reſt; he roſe again from the dead, to ſanctifie our reſurrection, and by his preſence there, he hath perfumed this bed, this houſe the grave.

Second *Uſe* for inſtruction. 1. Here is matter of meditation; when you are in your own houſes, bethink your ſelves thus; Now I am here walking in my houſe, from chamber to chamber, but ere long my chamber ſhall be in the duſt. Now I am coming to my bed in a dark night, but ere long God will put out the candle of my life, and will lay me in the grave, as in a bed of darkneſſe. Now I am in mine own houſe, but ere long my houſe will caſt me out to my grave, and that is the houſe that wil take me in.

2. Let it check in you all covetous and inordinate deſires after worldly things; Thou ſhalt come from lying in the dark houſe in the womb, to lye in the darke houſe of the grave. Oh what a vaſt company of inordinate and luxurious deſires are there in the hearts of

of men 1 in the womb one foot, in the cradle three foot will content you, and in the grave ſix foot; but when thou liveſt in the world, a whole world will not content you; there is ſuch inordinate and luxurious deſires in mens hearts, when they have all affluence and confluence of creature comforts. Now they muſt have their variety of Houſes, a Country-houſe, a Summer-houſe, a Winter-houſe; yet thou muſt exchange thy many houſes for one houſe. 'Tis worthy your notice, that paſſage you read in Scripture, 1 *Sam.* 10.24. *Samuel* when he had annointed *Saul* King, and the people had choſen him; what ſignall doth he give him to confirm him annointed, it was to goe to *Rachels* Sepulchre; Iſa.57.1. now the reaſon is this, that he might not be glutted with the preferments and honours he was entring upon. The Emperors of *Conſtantinople*, in their inaugurations, on their Coronation daies, had a Maſon came and ſhewed them ſeverall Marble ſtones, and asked them to chuſe which of thoſe ſhould be made ready for their Grave-ſtone. And ſo wee read of *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*; that he had his Tomb in his garden, to check the pleaſures of the place. Now in thy houſe thou haſt ſuperfluity and abundance. Thou canſt go now to variety of houſes; but one day thou ſhalt leave all thy houſes, and go to one houſe, and there leave all your company and your friends.

Elige ab his ſaxis, ex quo (in victiſſime Cæſar) ipſe tibi tumulum me fabricare velis.

But how can this be true, when the Scripture. *Object.* 1.

ture faith, Joh.8.51. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

To this I answer, that this Scripture intends not a natural and corporal death, but a spiritual and eternal death: and it is said John 11.25,26. *I am the resurrection and the life, he that beleeves in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live, and whosoever liveth and beleeveth in me shall never dye.* That is, though he dye naturally, yet he shall live eternally

2. *Object* *But you will say*, Enoch *was not buried, and* Elijah *was carried up in a chariot.*

Sol. Particular examples do not frustrate generall rules; though they were not laid in their graves, yet they underwent something equivalent to death. There was a particular reason why God translated *Enoch* and *Elijah* because they were to be types of Christs Resurection, and pledges of ours.

3 *Object.* *But some will say, as in* 1 Cor.15.51. *We shall not all sleep, but we shal be changed; therefore at the last day they shall not be buried, and the grave not the house of all men, but those that are then living shall be suddenly carried up to heaven.*

Sol. To this I answer, that at the last day though men shall not come to the grave, yet they shall be taken up when the trumpet shall sound, and shall goe through the fire; and they shall in their translation undergoe something that shall bee equi-

equivalent to a death, and to a buriall.

2. Laſtly, we are tied to this decree of death though God be not tied, *Rom.* 5.14. and *Rom* 9.27. By thoſe places we are to underſtand all men do deſerve to dye, though God may exampt ſome as thoſe that live to ſee the end of the world, from a death as ours is. Death is the end of all men, and the grave is the houſe appointed for all living. *Death hath preſſed upon all men becauſe all have ſinned.* All deſerve to die; and even thoſe that are changed at the laſt day undergo ſomething equivalent to death it ſelfe.

De jure mortis in omnes homines loquitur Apoſtolus, licet Deus aliquos à morte poſſit eximere. River.

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